Study on Improving Care for Geriatric Patients
Well-Being of the Singapore Elderly
Looking Back and Looking Forward: Our Patients' Stories
Mission to care for the elderly: Dr Seng Kok Han, newly-appointed Acting Chief of Geriatric Psychiatry, at work.

The number of elderly Singaporeans aged 60 years and above with dementia will jump from the current 28,000 to a projected 80,000 by 2030. Depression is another common psychological problem in older adults that needs to be noted.

Our healthcare landscape needs to evolve to meet the challenges of an ageing population. Playing a key role in this transformation at the Institute of Mental Health (IMH) is Dr Seng Kok Han, Consultant Psychiatrist and the newly-appointed Acting Chief of the Department of Geriatric Psychiatry.

Dr Seng accepts his new appointment with pride but also with a sense of humility. In another of his roles as IMH’s patient safety officer, Dr Seng affirmed his commitment to build a strong culture of safety and continuous quality improvement within IMH.

“Tackling the growing burden of mental disorders in an ageing population is important and challenging at the same time, but I cherish the opportunity to serve our elderly who have contributed to society all their lives and who deserve quality care.”

- Dr Seng Kok Han
Newly-appointed Acting Chief of Geriatric Psychiatry, IMH

Some upcoming developments shared by Dr Seng, to improve the quality of geriatric psychiatry at IMH:

Dementia-Friendly Wards

With funding from the Ministry of Health, IMH is renovating two geriatric wards to incorporate dementia-friendly design elements and new facilities that will help to improve care. These include better dormitory layout that will provide more privacy and convenience for patients, furniture that is carefully selected in terms of colour and materials to ensure a safe and calming environment, an occupational therapy room and a fitness gym, just to name a few.

The garden area outside the ward will also be overhauled to provide a therapeutic outdoor environment to aid in patients’ rehabilitation process. The improvement works are estimated to complete by September 2013.

Improving Medication Adherence

The Aged Psychiatry Community Assessment and Treatment Service (APCATS) is a community outreach programme where patients are treated within the community, such as their own home. In July 2012, the APCATS team initiated a Clinical Practice Improvement Project to reduce the rate of non-adherence to psychiatric medications among their patients. The APCATS team is also assessing caregivers on their competence in administering psychiatric medications. The project team aims to lower the risk of relapse, reduce caregiver stress and readmissions through medication adherence in the longer term.

Memory Clinic Service

The Department of Geriatric Psychiatry will begin running a Memory Clinic in FY13 to facilitate early detection of dementia on an outpatient basis. This service, offered under a specialist clinic that assesses the cognitive function of patients, will cater to the expected increase in the number of elderly with dementia. The target population for this service will be the elderly aged above 65 who are living in the northeast region.
IMH Launches the Singapore Schizophrenia Network

By Penny Chua, Corporate Communications

The Institute of Mental Health (IMH) has launched a new initiative, the Singapore Schizophrenia Network (SSN), to bring together agencies involved in providing mental healthcare and support to persons affected by schizophrenia. The 10-member network includes the Singapore Association for Mental Health, Singapore Anglican Community Services, Agency for Integrated Care and Sunlove Home.

This network will provide a common platform for the sharing of information on services and programmes offered by network members, so as to reduce duplication of effort and build synergies. Another aim is to establish collaborations to provide better treatment, care and support for persons with schizophrenia and their families as well. There will also be opportunities for partner agencies to learn the best practices and research findings from one another to build capability among agencies involved in the care of persons with schizophrenia.

Schizophrenia affects nearly 1% of the population and is a chronic psychiatric disorder that requires long-term medication and treatment. With active family and community involvement, care for persons with schizophrenia can be provided at the community level. The SSN will allow member agencies committed to the support of persons with this condition to better coordinate the care and support for them.

Equipping Primary Care Physicians with Addictions Knowledge

By Vera Soo, Corporate Communications

To push for early detection and treatment of addictions, the National Addictions Management Service (NAMS) has rolled out two new initiatives to equip primary care physicians (PCPs) to detect, provide brief intervention and refer persons with addiction problems for further help as needed.

The first is a toolkit which takes the form of an information brochure. Through a simple three-step approach, this toolkit helps PCPs identify and provide advice to patients who may present with symptoms of alcohol use disorders and gambling addiction.

The second is periodic training sessions on addictions for medical doctors, to equip PCPs with knowledge on various addictions and how to refer those affected for help.

Dr Eileen Tan, a family physician from Prohealth Medical Group @ Buangkok Pte Ltd attended the inaugural training session on alcohol use disorders organised by NAMS on 6 September 2012.

She said, “I wanted to get updates on treatment, since I do come across patients who seek help for alcohol use disorders.” Dr Tan also welcomed the toolkit, which she found was a good reference to help busy PCPs identify patients who may benefit from early intervention.

Certainly, it is envisaged that these new initiatives will aid in making help for addictions more accessible for the community and also extend the network of mental healthcare.

“Often, addicts are reluctant to seek help from a mental health facility or do so only at a very late stage when the addiction has become rather severe. PCPs are well-placed to pick up cases of alcohol use disorders and gambling addiction and refer their patients to NAMS or other treatment agencies if there is a need.”

- A/Prof Wong Kim Eng
Clinical Director, NAMS
IMH Leads in Study on Well-being of the Singapore Elderly

By Penny Chua, Corporate Communications

The Institute of Mental Health (IMH) has embarked on a three-year nationwide epidemiological study entitled Well-being of the Singapore Elderly (WiSE). This comprehensive study aims to establish high-quality data on the burden of dementia and depression among the elderly in Singapore, and to bridge the knowledge gap on the associated risk factors, healthcare use and economic impact. WiSE will also study the burden and needs of caregivers of the elderly who have dementia.

The multidisciplinary research team is led by A/Prof Chong Siow Ann, Vice Chairman, Medical Board (Research), IMH, and Dr Mythily Subramaniam, Deputy Director of Research. The team also comprises international and local research investigators from Changi General Hospital, IMH, King’s College London, Ministry of Health (MOH), National University Hospital and Raffles Hospital. This S$4.4-million study is funded by MOH and the Singapore Millennium Foundation, which is supported by Temasek Trust.

Given that Singapore’s population is ageing at the rate of 3% per year (which is two to three times higher than that of other developed countries) and that dementia and depression are growing public health issues in older adults, it is pertinent that more information on the impact of these illnesses on the elderly and their families is gathered.

The survey will be conducted from October 2012 to December 2013. Participants will be randomly selected from a list of all residents in Singapore, with equal representation for the three major ethnicities. A notification letter from MOH will be sent to these residents to inform them of the survey.

“As our nation gears up to meet the changing needs of our ageing population, mental healthcare for the elderly is one aspect that needs to be given priority and attention. Research and evidence-based healthcare services will help to improve the quality of life of our elderly who have complex, and challenging, medical and mental health issues.”

- A/Prof Chua Hong Choon
Chief Executive Officer, IMH

“The WiSE study will provide much-needed information to guide policy-making and the rational allocation of resources for the elderly and their caregivers, including the development of relevant services and programmes.”

- A/Prof Chong Siow Ann
Vice Chairman, Medical Board (Research), IMH
Building Mental Health Capabilities Across Borders

By Penny Chua, Corporate Communications

Southeast Asia is home to about 3.8 billion people, which is an estimated one-fifth of the world’s population. Recent years have seen the region inundated by floods, volcanic eruptions, typhoons and earthquakes. Such natural calamities, or man-made disasters, have claimed many lives and displaced many families in Asia each year.

Given the dense population, there is much to be done to build mental health services and programmes to support our local communities in times of crises. Building mental resilience should be a part of emergency planning, as it will help the population return to normalcy faster during a crisis. A resilient population has a reduced risk of developing emotional difficulties such as chronic post-traumatic stress disorder.

IMH, with the support of the Temasek Foundation (TF), is collaborating with tertiary healthcare organisations in the region to develop capacity-building programmes for mental well-being and resilience. The main objective is to support disaster-preparedness and the recovery of Asian communities affected by disasters.

A total of 840 participants from the three countries are expected to benefit from these programmes. The training programmes will help participants enhance their delivery of integrated mental health services for communities affected by disasters and also foster disaster preparedness through the promotion of community resilience and mental well-being.

The total cost of the programme for these three countries is S$2.38 million, largely enabled by a grant of S$1.96 million from TF.

A/Prof Chua Hong Choon, Chief Executive Officer, IMH said, “It is a great privilege for our hospital to work closely with our partners from Thailand, China and Indonesia. In learning about community mental health support systems in these three countries, the experience would also enhance our ability to provide psychological support in response to crisis nationally and internationally.”

HOMing in on Medical Education Research

By Penny Chua, Corporate Communications

The National Healthcare Group’s (NHG) Health Outcomes & Medical Education Research (HOMER) Grant is a short-term grant designed to encourage doctors, nurses, allied health professionals and medical researchers from NHG institutions to embark on medical education research. Regular HOMER webcast-style meetings are held for these researchers to share their results and findings with the cluster and to also encourage others to undertake medical education research as part of their training and development.

The inaugural meeting, a collaboration between the HOMER Unit of the NHG Education Development Office and our Education Office, was held on 12 July 2012 and attended by 25 participants from IMH. In the second “webinar” meeting on 16 October at the Alice Lee Smart Lab, Centre for Mental Health Education (CMHE), IMH, Ms Poh Chee Lien, Assistant Director, Nursing (Education) from the IMH Nursing Training Department, shared with the audience the findings from her HOMER project, “The Effects of Problem-Based Learning on Clinical Reasoning Ability in Mental Health Nursing.” Chee Lien commented that she found the HOMER meetings beneficial as they serve as “a great platform for healthcare professionals to learn about education research.”

IMH staff with a keen interest in medical education research are most welcome to join the quarterly HOMER meetings that will be held in 2013. An information sharing session on HOMER has also been planned for January 2013. For further details, please call 6389-2831/2833.
IMH Nurse Educator Bags President’s Award

By Fiona Foo, Corporate Communications

Ms Poh Chee Lien, Assistant Director, Nursing (Education), was one of three outstanding and exemplary nurses who received the President’s Award for Nurses from President Tony Tan Keng Yam on 24 July 2012. The award is a national accolade for the nursing profession.

Chee Lien, who has worked at IMH for three decades, expressed that her achievement came as a pleasant surprise. She said, “I never dreamed of winning this prestigious award. Just like when I started out as a nurse, I never saw myself reaching the position I am at now.”

Chee Lien is an excellent role model and a lifelong learner who is now pursuing her PhD. A firm believer in continuing education, she has spurred nurses of all ages to realise their dreams and aspirations and many look up to her as a mentor.

As a nursing educator, she develops strategic plans for Nursing Education at IMH and improves processes to standardise the development of curriculum and training materials. She contributes actively to mental health nursing through her publications and presentations locally and internationally. Chee Lien has introduced many learning initiatives including a Problem-Based Learning Process to guide nurses in case study discussions and to develop their critical thinking skills.

Chee Lien developed an interest in gerontology after she had an encounter with a 92-year-old dementia patient when she was a 22-year-old staff nurse. While doing a routine check on the patients during the night shift, Chee Lien covered the patient with a blanket to keep her warm. The patient then asked her, “Missy, what about you? The night is cold so would you like to share this blanket with me?” Chee Lien was so deeply moved by the incident that from then on, the elderly has always held a special place in her heart.

As a mother of three children aged between three and eight years old, maintaining a healthy work-life balance has always been a challenge. Chee Lien is thankful for the strong support that her family gives to her and she makes sure that she reserves her weekends for them.

Nurses’ Merit Award 2012

The Nurses’ Merit Award, established by the Ministry of Health, is presented every year to honour nurses who have made exceptional contributions to healthcare and for their dedication to the profession. Started in 1976, the Nurses’ Merit Award is open to nurses from the public and private sectors. The Award recipients consist of nurses who have demonstrated consistent and outstanding performance for the three years prior to their win; participated in professional advancement courses for their development; and also promoted a professional image of nursing.

This year, five nurses from IMH received their medals from Mr Gan Kim Yong, Minister for Health, on 16 July 2012.

- Mdm Neo Ah Hu, Principal Enrolled Nurse.
- Mdm Yong Kit Kit, Nurse Clinician.
- Ms Regina Lua Ubana, Advanced Practice Nurse.
- Mdm Ismawani Bte Mohamad, Nurse Clinician.
- Ms Khoo Xiaofen, Senior Staff Nurse.

(from left) Mdm Neo Ah Hu, Principal Enrolled Nurse; Mdm Yong Kit Kit, Nurse Clinician; Ms Regina Lua Ubana, Advanced Practice Nurse; Mr Gan Kim Yong, Minister for Health; Ms Pauline Tan, Chief Nursing Officer; Mdm Ismawani Bte Mohamad, Nurse Clinician; and Ms Khoo Xiaofen, Senior Staff Nurse.
NHG Excellence in Action Awards 2012

The National Healthcare Group (NHG) Excellence in Action Awards recognise outstanding staff who epitomise service excellence. The following staff and team personify NHG’s CARE Values of Confidence, Attentiveness, Respect and Empathy. The award was presented at the NHG Quality Convention on 28 October 2012.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allied Health</th>
<th>Medical</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms Ruki Wijesinghe, Senior Pharmacist (Clinical).</td>
<td>Dr Sung Min, Senior Consultant, Department of Child &amp; Adolescent Psychiatry.</td>
<td>Mr Arumugum Govindasamy, Assistant Director, Nursing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Thomas Chng, Senior Executive, Clinical and Allied Health Services.</td>
<td>Ms Ng Kee Huang Anita, Staff Nurse. Ms Xu Changqing, Nurse Clinician.</td>
<td>Response, Early intervention and Assessment in Community mental Health (REACH).</td>
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Singapore Health & Biomedical Congress 2012

Seven of our staff won awards at the Scientific Competition of the Singapore Health and Biomedical Congress (SHBC) 2012. Organised annually by the National Healthcare Group, the SHBC was held from 28 - 29 September. This year, the theme was “Reshaping Healthcare: Deepening the Foundation for Quality and Safety, Igniting the Engine for Education and Innovation”. The aim was to push the boundaries of radical transformation and strengthen the foundations of clinical quality and safety by improving current models through innovative ways.

Congratulations to all our winners!

- **Singapore Allied Health Award**
  - **GOLD:** Ms Eng Goi Khia, Assistant Psychologist, Research Division.
  - **BRONZE:** A/Prof Sharon Cohan Sung, Senior Clinical Psychologist, Department of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry.
    - “Depressive Symptoms in Singapore Primary Care Patients: Do They Differ Based on Age, Gender, or Ethnicity?”

- **Singapore Nursing Award**
  - **GOLD:** Mr Mao Rui, Senior Staff Nurse.
    - “Clinical Application of the Broset Violence Checklist to Predict Inpatient Violence in a Tertiary Psychiatric Hospital in Singapore: A Preliminary Study.”
  - **BRONZE:** Ms Sharon Tan Chay Huang, Nurse Clinician, Community Mental Health Services.
    - “The Effect of Illness Self-Management and Recovery Programme in Reducing Symptoms and Increasing Social Functioning of the People with Mental Illness in the Community: A Preliminary Study.”

- **SHBC Best Poster Award - Allied Health**
  - **SILVER:** Ms Carissa Nadia Kuswanto, Research Officer, Research Division.
    - “Genetic variation of psychosis susceptibility gene CACNA1C rs1006737 influences brain frontal volumes and white matter microstructures in schizophrenia.”

- **SHBC Best Poster Award - Basic Science / Translational Research**
  - **BRONZE:** Ms Milawaty Nurjono, Research Officer, Research Division.
    - “Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor (BDNF) Mediates the Effects of Smoking in Improving Negative Symptoms in Patients with Schizophrenia.”

- **SHBC Best Poster Award - Quality, Health Services Research**
  - **Ms Janhavi Vaingankar, Manager, Research Division.**
    - **GOLD:** “Health-related quality of life impairment associated with psychiatric and chronic physical conditions in Singapore.”
    - **SILVER:** “Needs of informal caregivers of people with dementia: A triangulation approach.”
NHG Teaching Excellence Awards 2012

The National Healthcare Group (NHG) Teaching Excellence Awards recognise clinicians and allied health educators who have been “paying it forward”. They have been involved not only in their daily clinical duties, but also classroom teaching where they share their knowledge with the next generation of healthcare professionals. IMH winners were honoured for their contributions towards education and mentorship at the Teachers’ Day Celebration on 31 August 2012.

- **NHG Education Leaders Award**
  A/Prof Swapna Verma, Chief, Department of Early Psychosis Intervention & Senior Consultant, Early Psychosis Intervention Programme.

- **NHG Teaching Award for Junior Clinicians**
  Dr Sutapa Basu, Associate Consultant, Early Psychosis Intervention Programme.

- **NHG Teaching Award for Non-Physicians**
  Mr Lawrence Tan, Senior Psychologist, National Addictions Management Service.

- **NHG Outstanding Education Partners Award**
  Prof Kok Lee Peng, Visiting Consultant, Department of General Psychiatry.

Asian Hospital Management Awards 2012

The Asian Hospital Management Awards recognise and honour hospitals in Asia that implement best hospital practices. One of IMH’s Clinical Practice Improvement Programme (CPIP) projects entitled “Promote improved integrated care through the reduction of patient rejection referrals to the Community Mental Health Services” was presented the Excellence Award (Runner Up) in the Service Improvement for Internal Customers project category at the ceremony in Hanoi held on 13 September. There were 363 entries from 89 hospitals across 12 countries vying for the coveted Award.

The Case Management Unit team, who led in the project, noticed that in one of the acute psychiatric wards, 45% out of 34 patients who were referred to the Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) rejected CMHT’s services. Hence, they developed the project with an aim to reduce the percentage of patients rejecting CMHT’s services by refining the selection process and doing more patient education. Their multidisciplinary team developed materials on CMHT services for easy reference, checklists for case managers to use prior to making a referral and handouts for patients and their caregivers. They also found that referring the right patient for CMHT services led to a decrease in rejection rate. To date, the rejection rate has come down to 22% from the pre-project rate.

NHG Improvement Project Competition 2012

The IMH team which led in the project “To reduce the number of wetting episodes in ambulatory patients with urinary incontinence in a long-stay psychogeriatric ward (Ward 66B) by 50% in 6 months” won the Best Project Award at the NHG Improvement Project Competition 2012. This multidisciplinary team, led by Nurse Clinician Yong Kit Kit, consists of psychogeriatricians, nurses, physiotherapists and occupational therapists.

Ward 66B used to experience an average of 79 wetting episodes weekly. Determined to reduce this number, the team introduced interventions such as scheduled toileting, discontinuation of adult diapers to foster self-awareness and the appointment of a Continence Champion for every shift. With the implementation of these solutions, the average number of wetting episodes decreased by 54%. Patients had an improved quality of life— they were less dependent on diapers, felt more comfortable and had higher self-esteem. For the hospital, the total annual cost savings was about $28,000, taking into consideration nurses’ time, laundry and diaper costs.
Celebrating Small Steps: VSOP Fundraising Concert 2012
By Cheong Yaun Marn, Corporate Communications

An abundance of talent was on show during the two sellout fundraising concerts on 25 October themed “Small Steps”, featuring patients from the IMH Very Special Outstanding Performers (VSOP) group. The choir members’ lovely voices and professional piano-playing delighted the audience thoroughly. Also impressive were the guest performers, which included the IMH staff ukulele group, the Chamber Choir from the Singapore Management University (SMU) conducted by Cultural Medallion winner, Jennifer Tham, and the Compassvale Secondary School choir.

Run by our Occupational Therapy Department, the VSOP programme enables inpatients and outpatients with psychiatric illnesses to benefit from the therapeutic effects of singing and performing in public. VSOP facilitator and Director of Rehabilitation Psychiatry in IMH, Dr Eu Pui Wai commented, “It is a joy to see the VSOP singers and dancers blossom and enjoy themselves along with the audience. It is great to see many IMH staff supporting the concert!” VSOP member, C.P. shared, “We want to do our best because people have so kindly paid money to see us perform.”

In a surprise finale, VSOP’s dance instructors from Apsara Asia, Shahrin and Abby, got the audience up on their feet and jiving “Gangnam Style” to the global K-pop rap sensation. It was certainly a rousing end to a most enjoyable and inspirational concert!

Celebrating Deepavali at Clinic B
By Cheong Yaun Marn, Corporate Communications

On the morning of 12 November, Clinic B ushered in Deepavali with patients and staff by inviting the talented daughters of Healthcare Assistant (HCA) S. Latha to perform an Indian dance entitled “Eastern Journey” in the clinic itself. Nine-year old Trishavani and seven-year old Shruthika showed off the skills they had gained from three years and one year of training respectively. They spun around to the upbeat music and drew much applause from patients and staff. After their performance, the girls, together with clinic staff decked out in festive red, distributed candies and chocolates to the patients while cheerfully greeting one and all a “Happy Deepavali!”

The sweet Indian sisters with HCA Carolyn Lai getting ready to dish out goodies to the patients.
IMH Celebrates World Mental Health Day 2012

By Vera Soo, Corporate Communications

For World Mental Health Day (WMHD) this year, IMH partnered the Singapore Association for Mental Health (SAMH) and the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) for a joint celebration at the School of the Arts (SOTA) on 6 October. Themed “The Way Forward: Weaving Community Safety Networks”, the event featured a variety of artistic performances by SAMH beneficiaries, IMH patients and volunteers. Close to 400 clients, caregivers, partners and members of the public were in attendance.

The keynote speaker at the event was Dr Daniel Fisher, a psychiatrist from USA who had recovered from schizophrenia. A role model for others who are struggling to recover, Dr Fisher’s life and accomplishments dispel the myth that people do not recover from mental illness.

During the event, IMH launched a photography exhibition, “Picture My World”. This exhibition is the result of a two-month long project where individuals who are recovering or have recovered from mental illness learn to use photography to express their feelings. It is hoped that this exhibition will help to dispel misconceptions about mental illness and also foster compassion and bolster support for those affected by it. The exhibition will rove to various venues (see box) and talks on mental health will be held when the exhibition is on show at the libraries.

In addition, IMH partnered Silver Ribbon Singapore for their celebration at Jurong Regional Library which began on 29 September. As part of this celebration, IMH staged the “Burst the Silence” exhibition targeted at youths. The exhibition encouraged youths to speak up about their emotional and mental health issues.

“Picture My World” – Roving Exhibitions

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Venue</th>
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<tr>
<td>23 Nov 2012 to 13 Jan 2013</td>
<td>8am to 6pm daily</td>
<td>Institute of Mental Health, Main Lobby</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 to 30 Jan 2013</td>
<td>12pm to 8pm daily</td>
<td>Tan Tock Seng Hospital, Atrium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 to 15 Apr 2013</td>
<td>10am to 9pm daily, closed on public holidays</td>
<td>Tampines Regional Library</td>
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To see more photos, logon to: www.picturemyworld.sg
Aid through the Airwaves: MediaCorp Radio Charity Drive for the Mentally Ill

By Deborah Koh, Corporate Communications

Since June 2012, Singapore’s largest radio network, MediaCorp Radio, has been helping to raise funds for the WHEF across 11 of their radio stations as part of MediaCorp Radio’s annual charity campaign, “Making A Difference”.

A large part of the donations from this charity drive will go towards the setup of a multi-sensory room for patients with intellectual disabilities at IMH. This room, with its controlled sensory input, will provide a safe environment for these patients and aid in preventing challenging behaviour from them and de-escalating crisis situations.

To raise funds and visibility, Mediacorp Radio held roadshows at AMK Hub over 2 weekends in September. Mediacorp radio celebrities made appearances at the roadshow which brought lots of fun for the young and old. Our Very Special Outstanding Performers (VSOP) patient choir performed and there was even an auction which included an OSIM chair autographed by Hong Kong celebrity Andy Lau. Patients from our Occupational Therapy: Activities, Vocation and Empowerment (OtCtAVE) centres also set up a booth selling crafts.

“We are truly grateful for the support from MediaCorp Radio and Daikin. We see this as a good opportunity, not just to raise funds for programmes that benefit our patients but also to raise awareness and understanding about mental illness. We would also like to thank the listeners who have been generous and forthcoming with their support and donations.”

- Dr Chua Hong Choon
Chief Executive Officer, IMH

IMH Charity Golf 2012 - Teeing Off for a Good Cause

By Deborah Koh, Corporate Communications

In conjunction with World Mental Health Day on 10 October, IMH, together with Seletar Country Club, organised the IMH Charity Golf 2012 to raise funds for the Woodbridge Hospital Endowment Fund (WHEF). Some 140 golfers took part in the charity tournament. Mr Gan Kim Yong, Minister for Health was the Guest-of-Honour during the dinner.

Although it rained and the game came to an early halt, spirits were not dampened. A total of $429,000 was raised through this event. The funds raised will go towards social and vocational rehabilitation, patient activities, welfare support as well as caregiver and family support for our needy patients and their families.

We thank all our sponsors and donors for their generous support in making a difference to the lives of people with mental illness!

Transforming Lives with Beautiful Hearts – About the Woodbridge Hospital Endowment Fund

The Woodbridge Hospital Endowment Fund (WHEF) was established in 2001 by the Institute of Mental Health to raise and receive funds for programmes over and above the basic medical services that benefit our patients. These programmes provide rehabilitation, welfare, as well as caregiver and family support to needy patients and their families. The WHEF also provides grants for research that may lead to better services and treatments for those with mental health problems. About $300,000 is needed a year to support ongoing programmes that benefit some 1,200 long-stay patients as well as outpatients and caregivers.

To find out more about donating to WHEF, visit www.imh.com.sg.
A New Chapter for IMH Nursing

By Elizabeth Ng, Nursing Administration

In October 2012, IMH bid a fond farewell to A/Prof Prema K, who has been our Director of Nursing for the past five years as part of her secondment to IMH from MOH. Taking over from her is Ms Samantha Ong, who has been appointed Acting Director of Nursing.

A/Prof Prema has made significant contributions to IMH during her tenure. One of the most notable was the recent attainment of the coveted American Nurses Credentialing Center’s (ANCC) Accreditation with Distinction in 2012, making IMH the first mental health institute in the world to receive this international stamp of approval for providing high-quality continuing nursing education. In addition, A/Prof Prema was the main steering force behind the establishment of the Centre for Mental Health Education (CMHE) and the Joanna-Briggs Institute - IMH (JBI - IMH) Centre for Evidence-based Practices in Mental Healthcare.

At a special farewell concert on 23 October, outpourings of accolades were heaped upon A/Prof Prema, who thanked the staff for their hard work and support.

Prior to her new appointment, Ms Samantha Ong had honed her leadership skills as Assistant Director of Nursing at IMH for three years. She was first posted to IMH in 1986 and has accumulated a wealth of experience in mental health nursing in her 26 years of service here.

Ms Ong shared her goals of advancing psychiatric nursing practice through forward-thinking, innovation, collegiality and empowerment.

“Every season comes to an end and there’s always a new season, which Samantha will now start.”

- A/Prof Prema K
Former Director of Nursing, IMH

“One of my top priorities is to champion nursing and patient care through a service-oriented culture by striving for excellence in quality and patient safety.”

- Ms Samantha Ong
Newly-appointed Acting Director of Nursing, IMH

Thank you, Prema– we wish you every success in your new pursuits!
Ask the Expert
Dr Jaydip Sarkar, Consultant
Department of General & Forensic Psychiatry
Institute of Mental Health

Q: What is Personality Disorder?
A: Personality is how we as individuals usually think, feel, act and relate with one another. It defines who we are as a person. Our personalities are shaped by our upbringing, the culture we live in and the prevailing societal norms. When a person’s usual ways of thinking, feeling, relating to others and to their own selves become extreme within the society they live in, these “out of the ordinary” personalities can be classified as personality disorders. It leads to repeated problems with too much or too little emotions, impulses, patterns of thinking, abilities to study and work and most importantly, in relating with others. It leads to lifestyle problems such as drug and alcohol abuse, self-harm, promiscuity and violence and a relative inability to pursue meaningful lives. These disorders are developmental in origin and tend to become evident in adolescence. However, a diagnosis should not be made until the person reaches adulthood (i.e. 21 years).

Q: What kinds of Personality Disorder are there?
A: Research suggests that persons with personality disorders tend to fall into three groups - Clusters A, B & C. Some people appear to act in slightly odd and eccentric manners and tend to move away from others and become socially isolated. These are individuals who do not wish to form a relationship with others (Cluster A personalities of paranoid, schizoid and schizotypal disorders). Another group appears to move towards people to deal with their lives in fearful and dependent ways but are unable to form healthy relationships and tend to be quite clingy (Cluster C personalities of anxious, dependent and obsessive-compulsive personalities). They appear to be at the opposite extreme from the first group. In between these two groups are people who are very dramatic and erratic in their behaviours and who tend to move against others in aggressive and violent ways. (Cluster B personalities like Borderline, Antisocial, Narcissistic and Histrionic disorders).

Q: What is the treatment for Personality Disorder? How can the family and friends help?
A: At present, treatment for personality disorder usually includes psychological (counselling and psychotherapy) and physical (medication) treatments, but the cornerstone of treatment is psychotherapy. There are different ways of talking with a sufferer. Short-term therapies may last several weeks, while longer-term therapies can last years. Medication is used only as an adjunct to talking therapies, and never alone in a treatment regime. Caregivers who form a support system for patients are extremely important in the treatment and need to be co-opted sometimes. Caregivers often need to support themselves, and they can do this by approaching or seeking a referral to a Family Service Centre.

Q: I think my friend may have a Personality Disorder. What can I do?
A: You can help by giving emotional support to your friend. Try to find out what is bothering or distressing him/her. It is important to be non-critical and non-judgmental when talking to your friend. A quiet chat about what is going on can help to look into deeper issues that the person is struggling with. Avoid imposing your own values and ideas, but simply be present and listen.

Remember, such people can be quite rigid in the ways they think, feel and behave and trying to get them to conform to different ways of dealing with life will only make them more distressed. Depending on their underlying personality, they will then either move away from, or move against you. Those who belong to the third group will, on the other hand, get you to solve all their problems and become overly reliant on you.

You could also advise your friend to seek professional help or call local helplines like the Samaritans of Singapore (1800-221-4444), the Singapore Association for Mental Health (1800-283-7019), or IMH (6389-2200).

Interested to Know More About Personality Disorder?
“Clinical Topics in Personality Disorder” brings together an expert synthesis of clinical advances in the knowledge and treatments for personality disorders over the last 10 years. Written by practitioners with real expertise in the field, the book is equally suitable for psychiatric trainees and more experienced clinicians from the full range of disciplines in mental healthcare.

If you would like to purchase this book, please visit the IMH eShop at www.imh.com.sg/eshop.
Looking Back & Looking Forward

Hear the hearts of patients who are recovering from mental illness as well as a caregiver, as they look back on 2012 and also look forward to 2013.

Hopes and Dreams
By Junainah Mohd Eusope

Having suffered from major depressive disorder for 16 years, Junainah, 57, is on the road to recovery. Through the Craft Creates programme under the IMH OcTAVE (Occupational Therapy: Activities, Vocation & Empowerment) rehabilitation service, she discovered her talent in craft-making and her enthusiasm has also spurred her peers on. She is also a mental health advocate with IMH.

I look back on 2012 with a mixed bag of emotions, as it was a year in which my dreams came true and also a year in which I experienced great torture.

On the family front, I faced intense relational pain as my sister went into depression after becoming a victim of marital abuse. Seeing her go through it gave me flashbacks of what I went through in 2002 when I was first diagnosed with major depressive disorder. It has been a rough adventure for me but I am glad that I have been stable for the last three years. I even feel that I have been living my life with a greater sense of purpose now.

My active involvement in making and selling crafts at the IMH pushcart in Suntec City from August 2011 to February 2012 made me feel accepted by society. It boosted my self-confidence and made me feel useful. For the future, it is my hope and dream to have an art and craft shop completely run by recovering patients from IMH. I believe that such a space will encourage them to have social interactions and thereby boost their confidence.

When I hear patients say that they are useless, I tell them not to give up hope. I believe that it was my willpower and faith that helped me to overcome my mental illness. I am also grateful for a support group of my friends from Simei Care Centre. Although we suffer from different mental illnesses and we hold different faiths, we empathise with one another easily and we meet monthly to encourage one another. Social support like this is very important, and I am truly glad to know that I am not alone. It gives me hope for the future and also strength to carry on.

Steady Steps Go a Long Way
By Faizal (pseudonym)

Faizal (pseudonym) used to suffer from panic attacks. He works as a counsellor in the community and is also an advocate with IMH to champion mental health.

2012 was challenging with work, study, family and myself. Much of the pressure came from the demands of my studies as I am currently pursuing a Masters degree in counselling. I had to clock in a total of 455 hours of practicum, supervision, group and personal counselling hours.

At times, I felt anxious having to read and digest so many journals. Although I found it all very stressful, I openly denied this pressure to keep myself sane. My resilience saw me through this excruciating time because what I had experienced in the past was even more than this— it was hell.

In counselling my clients, I have learnt that each individual is unique and that every one of us has motivation deep down. We just need to find it and work on it in small steps, one at a time.

As for me, I ate, shopped or dressed up for the occasion to reward myself for every achievement I made. And the achievements can be as simple as ending a practicum session or completing a short brisk walk through a park. The aim is to keep motivating myself. Having a simple reward for each achievement is a blessing and makes me feel good too.

All in all, 2012 has been a productive year for me. I liken it to a marathon that I have endured with positive thinking. The mix of ups and downs tells me that ambivalence is but part of life. In that, I take life in its simplest way.
From Sufferer to Survivor
By M. Zeng

M. Zeng, self-employed, has suffered from bipolar disorder and dissociative identity disorder since her teens. In her 30s now, she is an advocate with IMH to champion efforts to destigmatise mental illness and promote recovery.

2013 holds so much promise for me. The promise of a symptom-free life.

Like a shadow, the past reminds me of the pain of mental health woes wherever I go. It was not easy to fight the spiral into despondency and to surmount overwhelming traumatic memories. There were certain ideas that I held strongly to, such as “I can never forget the past and it will always haunt me”. “I can’t help it” was my belief and that saw me go in and out of IMH. I would hurt myself and threaten suicide because my self-hatred drove me to it.

In 2009, I made a conscious decision to disclaim that helpless assumption. Back when I was very sick, I would laugh at the idea that I could ‘control’ myself and my thoughts. Now, I know my mind is not my boss but that I am the one at the helm.

Love Shining Through a Ray of Light
By Raymond Anthony Fernando

M. Zeng, self-employed, has suffered from bipolar disorder and dissociative identity disorder since her teens. In her 30s now, she is an advocate with IMH to champion efforts to destigmatise mental illness and promote recovery.

2013 holds so much promise for me. The promise of employment. The promise of a symptom-free life.

Like a shadow, the past reminds me of the pain of mental health woes wherever I go. It was not easy to fight the spiral into despondency and to surmount overwhelming traumatic memories. There were certain ideas that I held strongly to, such as “I can never forget the past and it will always haunt me”. “I can’t help it” was my belief and that saw me go in and out of IMH. I would hurt myself and threaten suicide because my self-hatred drove me to it.

In 2009, I made a conscious decision to disclaim that helpless assumption. Back when I was very sick, I would laugh at the idea that I could ‘control’ myself and my thoughts. Now, I know my mind is not my boss but that I am the one at the helm.

My desires for 2013 are plenty. I hope to earn enough so that I can save up and take my mother on holidays. I also want to continue gaining mastery over my thoughts, which affect my moods.

All my ‘thens’ were borne out of FEAR - False Evidence Appearing Real. When fear knocks at the door, let FAITH – Full Assurance In The Heart – open it. I live by these principles and the results speak for themselves. I know that the ‘nows’ have changed me, from a sufferer to a survivor.

It’s never easy taking care of a loved one suffering from schizophrenia. In the past 37 years that I have cared for Doris, every day has been a learning journey for me. I have learnt that excessive noise, such as the hacking of walls during lift upgrading, can trigger a relapse of her mental illness. Last year, our journey became even more difficult due to Doris’ advanced arthritis. Through this, I have also learnt that when she is in extreme physical pain, she can relapse.

Apart from the emotional support and strength that I show to Doris 24/7, I have also learnt to take proactive solutions, like taking her out when hacking takes place in our block, and ensuring that the doctors monitor her arthritis condition very closely.

One of the highlights for us this year was our appearance and sharing on the local TV programme, “Everyday Heroes”. The show helped to raise more awareness on mental illness, and I was pleased that Doris managed the interview well.

Recreation is so important for persons with mental illness and their caregivers, because the journey is often a lonely and isolated one. As adoptees of our Catholic church, we get to go for fun-filled outings and be treated to sumptuous meals organised by church volunteers periodically. These activities gave Doris and I some of our best memories of 2012.

In 2013, I am looking to publish my 15th book, which will detail my 31-year career in broadcasting. Doris will be helping me to proofread this book, just like what she has done for all my earlier books. She has always done an excellent job. This is one way I can use her skills to keep her mentally alert, distract her from the pain of her arthritis, and give her a sense of worth, that she can contribute to society.
Break Out of Problem Gambling

Gambling is a common recreational activity not just for older adults but also the young. In the 2011 survey on participation in gambling activities among Singapore residents conducted by the National Council on Problem Gambling, more than 50% of respondents started to gamble regularly (at least once a week) before they turned 30.

However, when gambling becomes a problem, negative consequences will beset gamblers of all ages. At this public forum organised by the National Addictions Management Service (NAMS), get an in-depth understanding on problem gambling including the signs and dangers of youth gambling, and learn how you can help someone who has fallen prey to gambling addiction.

Date : Saturday, 26 January 2013

Venue : Health Promotion Board, Level 7 Auditorium
3 Second Hospital Avenue, Singapore 168937
(Nearest MRT: Outram Park)

Time : 9:30am – 12:30pm
(session will be held in English)

Tickets : S$8 per person; per session
(includes refreshments)

Book now via SISTIC* at 6348-5555.
For details, please visit www.nams.sg
*Excludes SISTIC booking fee

Problem Gambling Helpline: 1800-6-668-668