

# SGH Alumni Newsletter

ISSUE 45 | Apr — Jul 2024

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This e-newsletter is also available online at:

[https://www.sgh.com.sg/pgmi/sgh\\_alumnus/Pages/SGH-Alumni-e-Newsletters.aspx](https://www.sgh.com.sg/pgmi/sgh_alumnus/Pages/SGH-Alumni-e-Newsletters.aspx)

## NEW APPOINTMENTS

### Key Leadership & Clinical Appointments

#### Singapore General Hospital



**A/Prof Low Lian Leng**  
Chairman  
Division of Population Health &  
Integrated Care (PHICO)  
Singapore General Hospital



**A/Prof Tan Meng Yew Damien**  
Director, Innovation  
Singapore General Hospital



**Prof Julian Thumboo**  
Research & Innovation Director  
SGH Research and Innovation Office  
Singapore General Hospital



**Dr Lim Chee Hooi**  
Head, Gastroenterology & Hepatology  
Singapore General Hospital



**A/Prof Jason Chang Pik Eu**  
Clinical Educator Lead (Medical)  
SGH Education Office  
Singapore General Hospital

#### SingHealth HQ & SingHealth Institutions



**Dr Tyson Chan**  
Deputy Chief Medical Informatics Officer  
SingHealth Office of Regional Health (SORH)  
SingHealth



**Ms Ang Shin Yuh**  
Director, A.L.I.C.E @ SGH Campus  
SingHealth



**Dr Cheong May Anne**  
Co-Director, A.L.I.C.E @ SGH Campus  
SingHealth



**Dr Loh Hong Pheng Amos**  
Chairman, Division of Surgery  
KK Women's and Children's Hospital



**CI Asst Prof Poongkulali D/O Anaikatti**  
Chief Medical Informatics Officer  
Changi General Hospital



**Ms Janet Lau**  
Chief Communication Officer  
National Neuroscience Institute



**Ms Lim Hui Chee**  
CFO  
SingHealth Community Hospital



**Dr Teo Chiang Wen**  
Chief Medical Informatics Officer  
SingHealth Community Hospital

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## NEW APPOINTMENTS

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### Key Leadership & Clinical Appointments

#### SingHealth HQ & SingHealth Institutions



**Dr Xu Bangyu**  
Medical Director  
Sengkang Community Hospital



**Dr Loo Yu Xian**  
Medical Director  
Outram Community Hospital



**A/Prof Charles Chuah Thuan Heng**  
Clinical Director (Academic Medicine)  
Office of Academic Medicine (OAM)  
SingHealth  
Senior Associate Dean, Academic Programmes  
Management Department  
Office of Academic Medicine, Duke-NUS



**Dr Chandramouli Nagarajan**  
Head  
SingHealth Duke-NUS Blood Cancer Centre  
(SDBCC)



**Prof Tan Eng King**  
Associate Dean, Faculty Development (Clinical  
Researcher)  
Officer of Academic Medicine, Duke-NUS

## AWARDS

### SINGAPORE HEALTH INSPIRATIONAL PATIENT & CAREGIVER AWARDS 2024



Since 2010, the annual Singapore Health Inspirational Patient and Caregiver Awards honour individuals for their strength, courage and resilience in the face of their strength, courage and resilience in the face of health challenges, as well as outstanding patient support groups that have provided invaluable support to patients and caregivers. Each year, our awardees continue to inspire us with their ability to overcome adversity. Their experiences provide valuable learning for the doctors, nurses allied health professionals and other healthcare workers who care for them.

In 2024, we introduced a new category—Inspirational Partner—which will recognize the important partners in care among us, in particular, the many volunteers and patient support groups who have given their time and efforts selflessly to improve care.

This year, we recognize 56 award recipients across all award categories who continue to motivate healthcare professionals to deliver better care and inspire many others with their zest for life.

*Source: SGH Facebook*

## PRESIDENT'S AWARDS FOR NURSES 2024



*Ms Elena Mohamed Ayob (second from right) receiving the President's Award for Nurses from President Tharman Shanmugaratnam at The Star Gallery on July 19. ST Photo Shintaro Taya*

SINGAPORE – Ms Elena Mohamed Ayob's father wanted her, the eldest of his five children, to become a teacher – a noble profession, particularly for the older people of his generation.

Instead, she studied to be a nurse at Nanyang Polytechnic.

On July 19, Ms Elena, 45, received the President's Award for Nurses – the highest accolade for the profession in Singapore.

She is one of five nursing leaders who received the award from President Tharman Shanmugaratnam in a ceremony at The Star Gallery.

Ms Elena, a deputy director of nursing at Singapore General Hospital (SGH) where she has been working for the last 26 years, said she was attracted to the profession by the starched white cap nurses used to wear in the 1960s and 1970s.

To her, the cap stood for nurses' compassion, professionalism and passion to care for others – traits they also inspire in others.

She was disappointed when the caps "were done away with in 1989 after the hospitals were restructured", she said.

As it turned out, her father, who has since died, was not disappointed with her decision to become a nurse.

"To be fair, my father did not outwardly or violently object to my choice of career. (In fact), as time went on, he did become very proud of my achievements," Ms Elena told The Straits Times.

In 2021, she assumed the responsibility of overseeing the nursing staff at SGH – a portfolio often viewed as one of the most challenging within the nursing division.

For one thing, the annual attrition rate of nurses across Singapore was a key concern at the time – at SGH, it was 8.1 per cent.

Working with her team and the Ministry of Health (MOH), Ms Elena managed to reduce the attrition by over 30 per cent to 6.7 per cent in 2023.

"One of the things that we focused on for the last few years was ensuring and improving the well-being of the nurses and staff by increasing opportunities for engagement activities," she said.

"We have a platform for the nurses to raise issues and concerns safely, and for the supervisors and hospital to work on, such as creating an environment where the nurses feel safe to work."

The platform is "a physical huddle" where nurses discuss incidents that happened in the ward, how to de-escalate them, and what kind of peer support should be given to those involved.

As Ms Elena was co-chair of the hospital's staff well-being committee, she ramped up the number of engagement sessions for nurses to hear their concerns, guiding them towards resolving the issues on their own where possible.

With this approach, she has inculcated a culture among nurses to speak up and take responsibility for one's own well-being.

Another recipient of the President's Award is Ms Doris Koh Sok Hian.

The 50-year-old assistant director of nursing at the Institute of Mental Health (IMH) has made an impact on the lives of mental patients and mental healthcare in Singapore.

She was in the first batch of nursing students at Nanyang Polytechnic. When she graduated from the polytechnic as a registered nurse in 1995, she chose to work at IMH despite not knowing much about mental illness.

The initial months were tough as she had to deal with patients with unpredictable behaviour, those who were in denial of their conditions, increased levels of aggression, and others who refused medication.

Click here for full article: <https://for.sg/presidentawardsfornurses2024>

*Source: SGH Website*



## AWARDS

### NATIONAL DAY AWARD 2024



Heartiest congratulations to our National Day Awards recipients!

Public Administration Medal (Silver) recipient A/Prof Chow Wan Cheng;

Public Administration Medal (Bronze) recipients Prof Lo Yew Long, A/Prof Chong Tze Tec, Mr Heng Kian Guan, A/Prof Jason Chang Pik Eu, Prof Koh Tse Hsien, A/Prof Ong Hock Soo, Prof Tan Bien Soo, A/Prof Tan Chieh Suai, A/Prof Toh Song Tar, A/Prof Yeo Chin Pin, Mr Lee Jiunn Kee, A/Prof Low Lian Leng, Mr Kevin Low Wen.

*Source: SGH Facebook*

### SGH RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS ANGELS AWARDS



On 17th July 2024, SGH received the prestigious Angels Award from the World stroke organisation (WSO) for its exceptional stroke care and dedication to improving patient care pathways. SGH is the first hospital in Singapore to earn this honor, which recognises outstanding performance in critical acute stroke treatments.

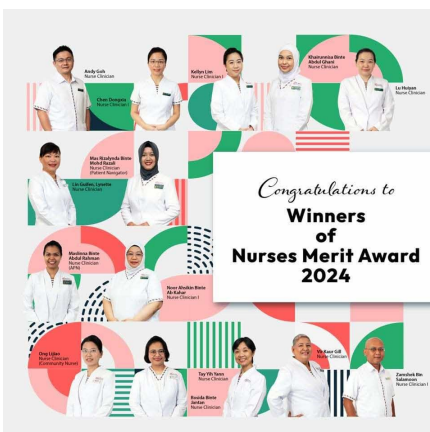
*Source: SGH Facebook*

### SGH RANKED AMONG NEWSWEEKBEST HOSPITALS IN ASIA PACIFIC 2024

We are excited and honoured to share that SGH has been ranked among Newsweek's Best Specialised Hospitals Asia Pacific 2024, in Orthopaedics, Endocrinology, Neurosurgery, and Neurology! Click here for more information: <https://for.sg/newsweekbestspecialisedhospitals2024>

*Source: SGH Facebook*

### NURSES' MERIT AWARDS 2024



We are thrilled to extend our warmest congratulations to the 14 outstanding recipients of Nurses' Merit Award 2024! Each of you has rightfully earned this esteemed recognition, and we couldn't be more proud!

The Nurses' Merit Award, presented by the Ministry of Health, Singapore, honours nurses who have consistently demonstrated exceptional performance over the past three years, engaged in professional development, and contributed to advancing the nursing profession.

For the list of winner, click here: <https://for.sg/nursesmeritawards2024>

*Source: SGH Facebook*

## NTU SINGAPORE AND SGH IN JOINT R&D LAB



Singapore General Hospital (SGH) patients are expected to benefit from healthcare innovations, such as customised medical devices and implants, under a collaboration with Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore) to set up a Joint Research & Development Laboratory in additive manufacturing (AM), also known as 3D printing.

These innovations are currently still in development, and when implemented, would represent a significant leap towards pioneering healthcare solutions that could redefine patient treatment.

The collaboration leverages the combined expertise and resources of SGH's 3D Printing Centre and NTU's Singapore Centre for 3D Printing (SC3DP) to study and develop related technologies for clinical applications in a point-of-care setup.

Professor Kenneth Kwek, Chief Executive Officer of Singapore General Hospital, said: "For more than 200 years, SGH has been a beacon of hope for all patients, consistently staying at the forefront of medicine. As a leading Academic Medical Centre with the privilege of being ranked among the world's best, our razor-sharp focus is on providing the best care and experience for our patients. This is a responsibility we take seriously, particularly as many who entrust us with their care have extremely complex health conditions.

We deeply value collaboration with like-minded partners and we are so grateful to find a key partner who shares our values and who brings with them deep expertise. Together, the possibilities that we can bring to our patients are limitless. We can advance care to enable better outcomes and a better experience for all patients and future users of healthcare."

Professor Lam Khin Yong, Vice President (Industry) of NTU Singapore, said: "Through the combined medical expertise from SGH and the extensive knowledge of additive manufacturing and advanced materials of NTU's faculty, our collaboration aims to forge innovative solutions in the development of personalised prosthetic and orthotic devices, and explore new pathways for regenerative medicine. This collaboration also greatly benefits the next generation of clinicians, academics and engineers, through its upcoming shared educational programmes, shared resources, and joint initiatives. NTU and SGH are committed to nurturing new talent that possesses the skills and knowledge needed to navigate the ever-evolving medical landscape."

The collaboration, which aims to provide solutions that could redefine patient treatment, reflects NTU's commitment to responding to the needs and challenges of healthy living and ageing, which is one of four humanity's grand challenges that the University seeks to address through its NTU 2025 strategic plan.

The Joint R&D Lab in additive manufacturing will focus on the following four areas:

### 1. Prosthetic & Orthotic Devices

This research area involves developing capabilities in the modelling and use of additive manufacturing methodologies for Prosthetic & Orthotic (P&O) devices, including Ankle Foot Orthosis, Wrist Hand Orthosis, and Below Knee Amputation Sockets.

Key objectives include defining design guidelines and requirements to 3D print the devices, which will involve engineering analysis, material selection, and functional testing. Additionally, the project will study and determine the most optimal materials and manufacturing techniques utilising various additive manufacturing technologies.

Click here for the full article: <https://for.sg/3dprintinginhealthcare>

## NUS AND SGH DEVELOP ALGORITHM-POWERED TESTS

A few tubes of blood, a urine test and a health questionnaire to determine a person's biological age are all that is needed to indicate one's future risk of mortality. A new class of clinical ageing clocks using these tests has emerged – PCAge and LinAge – which outline the healthy and unhealthy ageing trajectories and provide a new way to test ageing intervention strategies.

Clinical ageing clocks are tools or biomarkers that assess various physiological and molecular parameters to estimate a person's biological age, as opposed to his or her chronological age. This new class of clinical ageing clocks – developed by Associate Professor Jan Gruber from the Healthy Longevity Translational Research Programme at the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, National University of Singapore (NUS Medicine) and Dr Fong Sheng from the Department of Geriatric Medicine at Singapore General Hospital (SGH) – goes one step further in helping researchers to tailor longevity interventions, bypassing exorbitant longitudinal studies to test the efficacy of longevity drugs or supplements.

As an algorithm that leverages machine learning, PCAge takes advantage of an analytical matrix factorisation technique that can reduce complex high-dimensional data into lower dimensions. This approach generates a more informative representation of a patient's status, providing clues to identify the underlying cause(s) of co-morbidities and can inform the type of interventions that will be most efficacious.

The team used publicly available data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), which is one of the largest health and nutrition study in the United States of America, comprising more than 3,000 participants aged between 40 to 89 years. The researchers constructed their ageing clock (PCAge) using this historical data and went on to test its performance in several separate cohorts of patients. They found that, based on data from a single survey timepoint, often decades before death, PCAge showed significant predictive efficacy over 20 years and across a wide range of ages, illustrating its power in characterising individual future ageing trajectories. Informative predictions could be made in this way well before the onset of any specific pathology.

Click here for the full article: <https://for.sg/algorithmpoweredtest>

*(Source: SGH website)*

## SGH AND NNI STRAIGHTEN OUT ANSWERS TO SCOLIOSIS

Heavy school bags, poor posture, one-handed sports are often blamed for the development of curved spine in teens. Known as adolescent idiopathic scoliosis (AIS), it affects those aged 10 to 19 but has no known cause. A team from Singapore General Hospital (SGH) and National Neuroscience Institute (NNI) has now discovered that the answer to this condition may lie in the brain.

Employing a high-resolution and quality diffusion tensor imaging (DTI) brain MRI technique for brainstem tractography, the team found that patients with AIS had side-to-side differences in the corticoreticular pathway when compared against participants without AIS. This pathway links the brain's cortical motor areas and spinal cord and plays an important role in controlling one's posture and balance.

Associate Professor Reuben Soh, Senior Consultant, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, SGH, and the study's first co-author, shares, "We see patients as young as 10 years old and oftentimes, parents have the misconception that it's bad habits or lifestyle factors that are the cause of scoliosis. We embarked on this study to try uncovering the real reason and in doing so, we hope to be able to better care for patients and support them and their families in managing the condition."

Click here for the full article: <https://for.sg/scoliosisstudy>

*(Source: SGH website)*

## SGH GAINS Foothold THROUGH HEAL COMMUNITY

Beyond running community health posts in active ageing centres (AACs) to make healthcare services easily accessible for seniors living in Singapore's southeast region, Singapore General Hospital (SGH) has further expanded and deepened its efforts in the community through the Healthy, Empowered and Active Living (HEAL) programme.

SGH dietitians have conducted in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with seniors at Montfort Care's AAC in Bukit Purmei and Goodlife Makan in Marine Terrace to develop tailored nutrition awareness programmes. Seniors will learn about nutrition through interactive hands-on sessions and easy to understand nutrition snippets placed around their dining area at both Centres. This will enhance their overall communal dining experience and at the same time, empower them to manage their health and medical conditions through making the right food choices. This is but one of many HEAL initiatives that the Hospital has rolled out to better partner AACs under the National Age Well SG initiative.

The programme, made possible by the Low Tuck Kwong Foundation, started in 2021 amid the COVID-19 pandemic. SGH introduced several initiatives during the pandemic after noticing that many seniors were experiencing social isolation and loneliness from restrictions imposed by circuit breakers such as limiting home visits to those assessed by the hospital as necessary. They also lacked the means to communicate with their friends and loved ones via video calls or face to face interactions at AACs.

"Many seniors, particularly those living alone and of lower socio-economic status, struggled with their daily lives when COVID-19 hit. Some of them still do today. Having seen the impact of SGH's work in the community, we are happy to support their efforts in building a senior-centred ecosystem that could perhaps pave the way for similar initiatives across Singapore in future," said Ms Elaine Low, Chairperson of the Low Tuck Kwong Foundation.

Click here for the full article: <https://for.sg/healcommunity>

*(Source: SGH website)*

## MOU BETWEEN SINGHEALTH AND WORLD STROKE ORGANIZATION



The World Stroke Organization (WSO) and SingHealth today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to advance efforts to develop best-in-class stroke care across Southeast Asia.

The MoU aims to launch clinical service development, research, education, and advocacy initiatives focused on training and sharing best practices with hospitals in Southeast Asia, thereby improving the number and quality of certified stroke centres in the region.

Southeast Asia faces a particularly high incidence of stroke, and affects, on average, 1,300 people in every 100,000.[1] Despite this significant stroke burden, the access for patients in Asia to acute stroke care is limited, with access varying across different countries. [2] This highlights a substantial gap in the availability of stroke care services. In Singapore, there are 9,000 new stroke cases annually. It is the leading cause of adult disability and the fourth leading cause of death in Singapore.[3]

As an international organisation, WSO is committed to improving stroke care globally through the Angels Initiative, a unique healthcare initiative supported by Boehringer Ingelheim, that helps hospitals around the world and the Southeast Asia region, to enhance their stroke management practices.

Click here for the full article: <https://for.sg/worldstrokeorganizationandsinghealth>

*(Source: SGH website)*



## Dr Dileepa Banagala from Sri Lanka shares his fellowship experience in SGH, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery.

### What was your impression of Singapore's healthcare industry?

Singapore has a great healthcare system in place. It's an excellent blend of both private and state healthcare systems. By blending both systems, I observed that all patients get optimum patient care.

### Are there any differences compared to the healthcare industry in your country?

In Sri Lanka, private and state healthcare systems are completely separate.

### Why did you choose to apply to Singapore/SGH for your attachment?

It is well known that Singapore has one of the most advanced healthcare systems in the world, providing world-class treatment using the latest state of the art equipment and options. I wanted to experience that and also, Singapore is only 3 hours away from Sri Lanka. Therefore, it was very convenient for me to visit home.

### Did you face any difficulties (e.g. culture, language) during your attachment? What were they?



*Dr Dileepa Banagala and his fellow colleagues in the operating theatre.*

At the beginning I found it difficult to understand the Singaporean accent. But I was able to quickly adjust to it. Whenever an issue with language came up, my colleagues would always help me by translating.

### During your attachment, what was a 'typical' day like?

I wake up and walk just 200m to the MRT station. I found this really convenient. Since the MRT station was at a mall, I was able to grab a quick breakfast before boarding the MRT. After getting to the hospital, I would either help with patients at the clinic or join my supervisor for a morning ward round. After that, I would usually go to the theatre. Most of my time was spent assisting in the theatre.

After work, I took the MRT back to my apartment. Before heading back to my room I would go for dinner at one of my favourite restaurants at the mall.

### What were your learning experiences?

Apart from learning about Singapore in general and about Singapore's healthcare system, I was able to learn a lot in Orthopaedic Surgery. I experienced robotic-assisted surgeries for the first time. I can honestly say that my supervisor Prof. Yeo Seng Jin reignited my interest in clinical work and surgeries.

### How has the attachment made an impact on you?

Like I mentioned above, the 6 months I spent at SGH reignited my clinical interests and made me love the work that I do, all over again.

### What did you enjoy most during your attachment?

Personally, when I first arrived in Singapore, my whole family came with me too. It was the first time my children had travelled outside of Sri Lanka. So it was amazing to give them that experience. We travelled to most of the tourist destinations including Sentosa Island and Universal Studios.



*Dr Dileepa Banagala and fellow colleagues taking a pose.*

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Professionally, I most enjoyed my time in the theatre, assisting my supervisor and operating under his supervision. It was a great stress-free learning experience.



**Would you recommend SGH to interested fellows? Why?**

Absolutely!!! Because undergoing fellowship training in Singapore will give any fellow an immense boost for their future career.

**How would you describe your fellowship experience in 3 words?**

Simply the BEST!!!



**TELL US  
WHAT YOU WANT!**

We are always looking for ways to improve and engage our alumni members. If you have any suggestions or ideas for newsletter contents or alumni events, know anyone who would like to contribute to the newsletter, please let us know! Email your suggestions and contributions to [alumni@sgh.com.sg](mailto:alumni@sgh.com.sg)

# UPCOMING EVENTS

**Oct 2024**

**16TH**

**SGH Lunchtime Q+A with GPs**

Presented by A/Prof Lee Haur Yueh and Dr Karen Choo Jui Lin, Department of Dermatology, SGH  
Dr Amanda Lam Yun Rui, Department of Endocrinology, SGH

**23rd**

**GPCME Webinar: Renal Medicine**

Presented by Dr Tan Chee Wooi, Department of Renal Medicine, SGH  
Dr Irene Mok, Department of Renal Medicine, SGH

**30th**

**GPCME Webinar: Pelvic Floors Disorders**

Presented by Dr Chua Hong Liang and Dr Jill Lee Cheng Sim, KK Women's and Children's Hospital  
Dr Cherylin Foo, Department of Colorectal Surgery, SGH  
Dr Valerie Yeap, Department of Gastroenterology, SGH

**Nov 2024**

**6TH**

**GPCME Webinar: 4th Annual GP Kidney Transplant Webinar**

Presented by Dr Kek Peng Chin, Department of Endocrinology, SGH  
Dr Liew Ian Tatt, Department of Renal Medicine, SGH

**7TH**

**GPCME Webinar: Nocturia: A Urologist Approach to a Non Urological Condition**

Presented by Dr Ng Tze Kiat, Department of Urology, SGH  
Dr Tan Yu Guang, Department of Urology, SGH  
Dr Edwin Jonathan Aslim, Department of Urology, SGH

**11TH**

**GPCME Webinar: What's new in Pregnancy screening?**

Presented by Dr Yang Liying, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, SGH  
Dr Lee Wai Yen, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, SGH

**13TH**

**SGH Lunchtime Q+A with GPs**

Presented by Dr Rajesh Hemashree, Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, SGH  
Dr Charlene Tang Yu Lin, Department of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging, SGH

**27TH**

**GPCME Webinar: Endocrinology\***

\*Please refer to our website <https://www.sgh.com.sg/pgmi> for events updates.

# SGH LUNCHTIME Q+A WITH GPs

Have burning questions pertaining to medical care?

Join our clinicians at the SGH Lunchtime Q+A with GPs that takes place on Wednesday from 1pm to 2pm. Each session, we have our specialists from 1-2 disciplines online to take your questions live.

For more information on the upcoming sessions and to register and pre-submit your questions, please click on the below link (internet access required):

<https://for.sg/sgh-lunchtime-gp-qna-2024-registration>



\*Please refer to our website <https://www.sgh.com.sg/pgmi> for events updates.



**SGH ALUMNI NEWSLETTER**

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