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UPCOMING EVENT



NHG Education

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A Deliberate Retreat to Move Forward

Physician wellness, improving clinical training environment and experience, and nurturing self-directed learners were some of the hot topics that emerged during the National Healthcare Group (NHG) Graduate Medical Education Committee (GMEC) Retreat, held on 11 February 2019 at the Nanyang Technological University Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine Novena campus.



Dr Faith Chia

"I was glad that these (topics) were aligned with what our faculty and residents felt were pressing areas of need," said Dr Faith Chia, NHG Residency Designated Institutional Official.

As a co-facilitator of the retreat, she was impressed at how spiritedly engaged the 80 programme directors, associate programme directors clinical core faculty members, residents and administrative staff from NHG Residency were in their discussions and debates on the hot topics and current pressing issues.

"They (the participants) were clearly very invested in these topics, with us having to constantly remind them to take their tea breaks!" quipped Dr Chia.

Echoing that, co-facilitator, Ms Yvonne Ng, Senior Director (NHG Education) said she was "delighted to see that participants are so passionate about improving the quality of residency training and taking ownership to make it happen."

"The retreat is very different in a positive way," she added with a smile.

Ms Ng shared that one distinct difference of this retreat was the approach taken to determine NHG Residency's direction for the next two years. Participants were given the opportunity to put their voices in and share what and how NHG Residency can do better and do differently to move into the next wave of high performance. Building a community of care for faculty, residents and administrative staff was also passionately discussed.

And what was pleasing to both Ms Ng and Dr Chia was how closely aligned these topics voted by the participants were to those identified by NHG Education leadership.

To keep the momentum going, participants enrolled themselves into one of four action planning teams to develop strategies and execute initiatives



**Faculty,
residents and
administrators
engaged
in a World
Cafe-styled
discussion**



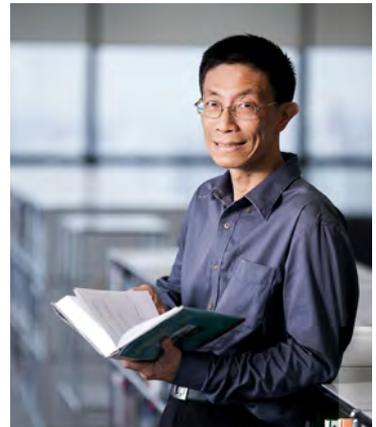
based on the shortlisted topics, over the course of one year.

“I hope that we can harness the energy and ideas from the retreat to bring about real change for our learners,” Dr Chia said.

She shared that she was heartened that many participants contacted her team after the retreat, volunteering to join various other workgroups and action planning teams. “I felt a deep sense of pride to be part of this NHG Residency family,” Dr Chia said.

“And I hope that in the next two years, NHG Residency will continue to hold on to what we feel is most important to us; the sense of family and belonging.”





More Than a Programme: Promoting Wellness Within the NHG Psychiatry Residency Programme

BY ADJUNCT ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR SIM KANG

There is increasing interest in understanding burnout within the medical profession worldwide as we work within fast paced and evolving healthcare systems, and yet also interface intimately with individual patients and their families, which is the *raison d'être* for our training and practice.

Within the literature, we know there is a relatively high prevalence of burnout within medical students (up to 75 per cent), practising medical professionals (up to 60 per cent) and residents (junior doctors) in training (up to 80 per cent).

A recent local study done by the SingHealth cluster found that the rate of burnout amongst surgical and medical residents stood at 80 per cent. Correspondingly, data have revealed that the rates amongst psychiatry residents vary from 20 to 87 per cent but few have studied their associations with intervening factors (such as stress levels, resilience level, coping) within the learning environment.

Hence, we seek to better understand burnout and correlates within our local residency programme and there were two main observations from our data to date.

First, learning environment mediated the relationship between stress and burnout which underscores the importance of paying heed to improving facets of learning environment which can ameliorate burnout.

Second, we found a significant rate of burnout within our residents (58.4 per cent). The resident group with burnout was associated with

poorer perception of the learning environment, greater perceived stress, stigma and use of avoidance coping strategies.

These findings viewed within existing models of burnout allow us to suggest specific strategies including aspects such as addressing stressors, beefing up coping skills, continual support and developing resilience which we need to incorporate into our residency programme to promote wellness within our learners.

Adjunct Associate Professor Sim Kang is a Senior Consultant Psychiatrist at the Institute of Mental Health, and the Programme Director for the NHG Psychiatry Residency Programme. He is also an Adjunct Associate Professor at NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine and NTU Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine.

HOMing in on Doctor-Patient Communication

Communication between doctor and patient may not always be clear or effective, especially in a busy clinical environment where medical terms fly around, emotions run high, and young doctors still learning the complex nuances of healthcare.

In an attempt to address potential communication lapses, Dr Janine Kee, Consultant (Tan Tock Seng Hospital [TTSH] Psychological Medicine) collaborated with the team from National Healthcare Group (NHG) Health Outcomes and Medical Education Research (HOMER), led by Dr Khoo Hwee Sing, Senior Research Analyst (HOMER) to develop a communications training module based on “real-world data” that would provide doctors with applicable communication skills that are relevant and effective in their practice.

The study team spearheaded by Dr Mervyn Koh, Head of Department (TTSH Palliative Medicine) and Mr Issac Lim, Head (HOMER), decided that analysing existing patient feedback would help the researchers develop relevant solutions.

Hence, patient feedback gathered from 2013 to 2014 were used as the basis for Drs Kee and Khoo’s research, where they identified four general and nine sub themes associated with the junior doctors’ communication challenges. The four general themes included: non-verbal, verbal, content and perception of attitudes.

Case scenarios were then designed based on the identified themes, and introduced into the TTSH Postgraduate Year One (PGY1) training curriculum in 2016.

During the practise sessions, the incoming PGY1s would cycle between the roles of doctors and peer observers with the assistance of standardised patients (SP) – who were trained specifically for each case scenario, where they would receive immediate feedback from the SPs on their verbal, non-verbal and overlooked cues. Clinician communication experts who monitored the training sessions will also provide their feedback to the PGY1s at a debrief session when the training session concludes.



**Dr Janine
Kee at the
April 2019
TTSH PGY1
orientation**

More than 95 per cent of the PGY1s from the inaugural run agreed that the training session adequately prepared them for their day-to-day role as an incoming junior doctor. Dr Khoo shared that subsequent PGY1 batches reported an increase in their level of self-competence for all communication aspects after receiving the training and four months after going through their first rotations as doctors.

“In our work, we managed to integrate communication competencies into a communications skills education module for PGY1s. By utilising such data, we facilitated the learner’s appreciation of the module’s relevance and in turn encouraged active engagement,” said Dr Kee, adding that their research also addressed service improvement from a quality perspective, bridging the gap between “quality” and “education”.



^ Dr Khoo Hwee Sing

“It is crucial to work towards the translation of research into practice for the community to benefit from our study findings,” said Dr Khoo. She shared that “impactful research” need not require massive or large research resources to be considered successful. “(Using) existing data sources such as patient feedback, can help us understand the patient’s perspective and provide valuable learning insights.”

The fourth run of the communications skills module concluded in April this year.

Dr Khoo Hwee Sing is a Senior Research Analyst at HOMER, NHG Education. She is involved in research on clinician communication, resilience, and ethics, and collective leadership evaluation for NHG.



Dr Janine Kee is a Consultant with Psychological Medicine, Tan Tock Seng Hospital, and a Clinical Core Faculty Member of the TTSH PGY1 Programme. Her interests include education pedagogies, qualitative research and bridging the gap between quality work and education initiatives.

Kee, J. W. Y., Khoo, H. S., Lim, I., & Koh, M. Y. H. (2018). *Communication Skills in Patient-Doctor Interactions: Learning from Patient Complaints*. Health Professions Education. <http://bit.ly/CommSkillsPatientFeedback>

A Talk about the Future

Tan Tock Seng Hospital's Pre-Professional Education Office (PPEO) conducted a second Advanced Care Planning (ACP) talk for its Standardised Patients (SP) within a span of two months on 31 January 2019, as their first talk on 11 November 2018 was met with much praise from its participants.

Ms Sandy Tan from TTSH PPEO shared that her team did not expect their first SP welfare educational talk to receive such "overwhelming response".

SPs are actors who role play as patients to help in the training and assessment of healthcare professionals.

The 45 SPs who attended both sessions were introduced to a variety of future health and personal care planning tools such as Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA), Advanced Medical Directive (AMD) and ACP.

And through a card game (ACP Conversation Cards Game) designed by a group of final year students from Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University (Singapore), the SPs gained a better understanding of what matters to them, which helped them prioritise their care wishes and preference.

Ms Tan shared that the team was heartened to know that at the end of the ACP talk, a few SPs approached the facilitators to have their ACP done.

"This is informative and is a move towards a caring society. Although I have signed the AMD and LPA, ACP is new to me. I am glad there is another avenue to express one's current wishes, and to be able to change as situation dictates," shared one SP.

"The Kopi Talk is really useful for us as senior citizens to have a clear understanding of the various options that we can plan to alleviate any problems that may arise should we be in a deteriorating state of health, mind, sudden death or disabilities," said another.

"We have a better idea to facilitate our portrayal (of the scenarios) should SP cases like this arise in the future," said an SP who intends to apply what was taught into the scenarios.

Encouraged by the positive response, Ms Tan shared that the team intends to organise more health-related educational talks for the SPs on a regular basis.



Mr Roland Chong, Senior Coordinator for ACP, was the speaker for the 1st run.



Ms Jessie Eng Ramdat, Coordinator for ACP, was the speaker for the 2nd run.



Planting the seeds of Inter-Professional Collaboration with SIPR

BY MS FAUSTINE YAP

As part of TTSH Pre-Professional Education Office's (PPEO) continued efforts in enhancing students' learning experience whilst promoting inter-professional collaboration amongst the undergraduate students posted to the hospital, the 4th Student-Led Inter-Professional Round (SIPR) was held at the Centre for Healthcare Innovation (CHI) on 8 March 2019.

Previously known as the Multi-Disciplinary Rounds (MDR) during its inception in 2017, the SIPR aims to provide students a platform to understand the inner workings of inter-professional healthcare delivery such as collaborating to formulate a plan of care for the patient, encouraging effective communication across the different healthcare disciplines, and most

importantly showing respect and appreciation for each other.

This year, the PPEO Team decided to upscale the SIPR by applying their observations from a real MDR session conducted by the multidisciplinary team from the Department of Geriatric Medicine. By introducing a streamlined presentation sequence for the different professional groups and increasing the number of cases discussed, the intention is to provide students with a realistic simulated experience and sufficient presentation time to apply what they have learnt.

Despite the students' (understandable) bout of nerves during their case presentations to a group of about 50 observers - made up of their fellow peers to senior clinicians, a vibrant exchange ensued, much to the delight of lead facilitator, Ms Law Hwa Lin (Clinical Educator Lead, TTSH Pharmacy). The vibrant exchange of presentations and questions asked by students showed good evidence that learning is taking place during the session.

The students agreed that the SIPR was a new and good learning experience for them, with many finding it beneficial to understanding the perspectives of other healthcare professional groups, the opportunity to interact with future colleagues, and to have a healthy exchange of ideas within a psychologically-safe simulated environment.

Heartened by the positive response, the PPEO team will continue to provide opportunities such as this to spur healthcare students on to become better healthcare professionals.



The team from TTSH PPEO with the students from the 4th Student-led Inter-Professional Round.