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Deadline: 16 December 2019

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Hanging Out at the Dorm

Over 200 medical residents (junior doctors), faculty and administrators from National Healthcare Group (NHG) Residency bonded with some 320 migrant workers over meals and activities at the Mandai Westlite Dormitory on 3 and 4 August 2019, as part of NHG Residency's annual community engagement efforts.

Organised by the NHG Resident Council, the visit aims to bridge the relationship between the residents and migrant workers, as well as to gain a more holistic perspective of the workers' daily lives and culture.

"We decided to visit the migrant workers because they are not the first group that comes to mind when people volunteer for (unlike seniors or children)," shared NHG Resident Council President, Dr Andrea Ang, who is also a senior resident in Rheumatology. "They are a significant part of our society, as there are 1.4 million migrant workers in Singapore."

Dr Faith Chia, Designated Institutional Official, NHG Residency, echoed Dr Ang and added that: "The migrant worker population is an important part of our community and continues to contribute to Singapore's growth and progress. We hope to further bridge the cultural differences, and address their needs more effectively."



Residents having lunch with the migrant workers.



"We want our doctors to deliver the best care they can for all our patients. To enable this, it is vital that they are able to see the patient as a 'whole' person, beyond his or her medical needs."

Participants such as first-year Internal Medicine resident, Dr Norman Lim shared that through the interactions with the workers, he learnt more about their long term goals and aspirations. “They view their time in Singapore as a temporary place to get income, and eventually start businesses back home,” he said.

“We (residents) should view them as a whole person, try to find out more about their background, and take the time to discover the other aspects of their lives.”

General Surgery resident Dr Oh Shen Leong found the visit an eye-opener. “When we see the migrant workers, we may think that they are only here for a short time, a visitor in our country... we were surprised to learn that a lot of them have actually stayed in Singapore for well over ten years, some twenty years... they are just as much a part of the Singaporean family,” he said.



An impromptu soccer match between the residents and migrant workers.

Informed Consent: An Experiential Workshop

A first-of-its-kind role-playing workshop on informed consent titled “Sign on the Dotted Line – what does informed consent really mean?” was organised by National Healthcare Group (NHG) Residency for some 20 NHG medical residents, and faculty in June this year.

“The change in climate of consent taking in recent years, with the introduction of the modified Montgomery test and highly publicised cases of disciplinary actions taken against doctors for informed consent related issues in the press, has created an atmosphere of unease and even confusion amongst junior doctors,” said Designated Institutional Official (NHG Residency), Dr Faith Chia who initiated this workshop. She hopes that the workshop will help eliminate the ambiguity in consent taking.

Conducted by Senior Counsel Kuah Boon Theng and her associates from the Legal Clinic LLC, the OSCE-styled (Objective Structured Clinical Examination) workshop brought the participants through various legal and practical aspects of obtaining informed consent from their patients, what constitutes sufficient information for the patient to give his or her informed consent on the treatment options, and a scenario-based exercise to help participants apply what they have learnt.

Through the workshop, Ms Kuah emphasised the need for doctors to shift from the doctor-centric practice of overloading the patients with medical information (“information dumping”) – which may confuse them, to a patient-centric one which focuses on what the patient considers “materially relevant”.

“Take note of the patient’s background, occupation, and



Ms Kuah Boon Theng bringing participants through the legal aspects of obtaining informed consent.



An assessor looks on as NHG resident (right) goes through an OSCE-styled practical session with the standardised patient.

lifestyle choices, as that would provide you with hints on what the patient regards as important,” stressed Ms Kuah.

“(Ultimately) It is a collaborative exercise between doctors and patients, and your role (as a doctor) is to empower patients to make decisions for themselves.”

The workshop was well received by the residents and faculty who attended, with many agreeing that the practical tips offered were useful and applicable to their clinical practice, and provided a better understanding of what consent taking constitutes.

The participants, in turn, were commended by the standardised patients, role played by associates from the Legal Clinic LLC, for their communication skills, and the degree of empathy and adaptability shown toward them during the practical exercises.

“We were privileged to have Ms Kuah partner us for this workshop, as the legal perspective of informed consent is invaluable,” said Dr Chia. “While there have been many talks given on informed consent, there haven’t actually been scenario-based workshops where our residents (junior doctors) can apply the knowledge, and receive feedback on their informed taking.” She hopes that this workshop will be offered again in the near future.

Fostering Stewardship as an NHG HOMER Grant Reviewer

Being an NHG-HOMER grant reviewer extends beyond providing feedback to applicants, and recommending suitable Health Professions Education (HPE) research projects. Three outstanding reviewers, who were recognised for their invaluable contributions to the NHG-HOMER grant, shared their perspectives and benefits of being a grant reviewer.

Dr Preman Rajalingam (Assistant Dean for Educational Development and Senior Lecturer in Medical Education, NTU LKCMedicine), sees that reviewers can contribute to the development of HPE research, by ensuring a consistent standard of quality control, providing feedback on research designs improvements, and helping make connections to other researchers that may spark future collaboration(s).

To fellow grant reviewer, Dr Ivan Woo [Principal Medical Social Worker, Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH)], a reviewer has three main roles:

- 1) Steward of the HOMER grant;
- 2) Co-learner with grant applicants; and
- 3) Influencer in the future direction of HPE.

Elaborating on what it means for him to be a good steward of the HOMER grant, Dr Woo explained, "I would always ask myself if the proposal reviewed by me would result in good returns on investment for the healthcare professionals, and ultimately, our population in Singapore. To support a proposal with much potential for social impact would be an act of good stewardship."

On the topic of stewardship, Ms Lee Sin Yi (Senior Physiotherapist, TTSH) perceived it as the reviewer's responsibility to ensure that public funds are channeled appropriately into research that will benefit the population. Having been a grant reviewer for the past four years, Ms Lee said: "The research that we support through the grants, should benefit not only health professions education, but also impact on clinical practice, health care and population health. We have to be keenly aware of what is needed for health professions education, based on our understanding of the current healthcare landscape and needs, in order to ensure that strategic projects and research should receive the necessary funding."

All three reviewers agreed that being a grant reviewer is also beneficial to their own learning and development.

"Reviewing manuscripts as well as grant proposals become part of my continuous education journey," said Dr Woo. "The review process opens up new knowledge to me."

Sharing the same sentiment, Dr Rajalingam said, "Participating in peer reviews keeps me abreast with the latest developments in my field, it also helps me develop a sensitivity to what is good and bad academic writing, and inspires me to get on with my own writing."

"It has been a learning experience as a reviewer for HOMER. This is a valuable process, where I am able to hone my understanding of research and grant writing as well," said Ms Lee. "It has also widened my perspectives into the research field of Health Professions Education, and what are some of the possible future areas we should develop and grow."



< From left to right : Dr Ivan Woo,
Dr Preman Rajalingam, Ms Lee Sin Yi



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NHG-HOMER Grant

The NHG-HOMER Grant was established in 2011 to encourage the pursuit of research in the field of Health Professions Education (HPE). Aiming to enable, and also develop healthcare professionals and ancillary staff in the creation and curation of user-inspired research to augment clinical practice. To date, HOMER has awarded grants to 93 research teams in various institutions. The funding paved the way for multi-institutional collaborations across different specialities, reinforcing interprofessional collaborations, and the translation and transfer of knowledge and theory in learning and teaching.

To apply for the FY2020 NHG-HOMER Grant, please refer to:

<https://www.nhgeducation.nhg.com.sg/homer/homer-grant/grant-forms>

Caring Beyond The Hospital Walls



The team from TTSH Pre-Professional Education Office and NTU LKC Medicine.

Seven administrative staff from the Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH) Pre-Professional Education Office (PPEO), and four medical students from the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (LKC Medicine) spent their Saturday morning on 14 June in a painting activity – not on paper or canvas, but the walls of the television (TV) room at the Asian Women’s Welfare Association (AWWA) Senior Community Home.

The painting activity was the first local outreach initiative by TTSH PPEO, meant to allow students from different healthcare fields to experience experiential volunteerism with beneficiaries.

Learning that the common room for the 140 seniors living at AWWA was rundown and dull, the team decided to give it a fresh coat of paint,



Decked out in painting gear, the team gave the common “TV” room a fresh coat of paint.

cleaned and disinfected the room to liven the residents’ moods.

“It is heartening to witness the smiles of elderly as they peeked into the TV room with much anticipation while the team tirelessly painted to revamp the room,” said Ms Jacqueline Ho, Executive, TTSH PPEO. “We all came together with one purpose - to provide care to the community beyond the hospital walls, and make a positive impact to our beneficiaries’ living environment.”

Ms Tiffany Boey, Executive, Community Partnership and Relations (AWWA), shared that she noticed an increase in the number of seniors hanging out in the newly-painted room. “On behalf of our seniors, thank you and your team for taking time out of your busy work schedules to come down and paint the TV room,” she said.

< The common “TV” room getting a new lease of life.

Caring Beyond Our Shores

Eight students from Nanyang Technological University (NTU) Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (LKC Medicine), and two administrative staff from the Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH) Pre-Professional Education Office (PPEO) travelled to Bacolod City, Philippines, as part of LKC Medicine's Overseas Community Involvement Project, and TTSH PPEO's Interprofessional Education initiative from 6 to 14 July this year.

Called Project ISIP, Ms Shalimar Ramirez, from TTSH PPEO, and a fellow team member shared that the team adopted the Hiligaynon (dialect of the Ilonggo people in Bacolod City) word "ISIP", which means "think", because the team "wanted to 'think' of creative ways to reach out, and share healthcare knowledge to the rural communities that they were visiting".

The eight-day trip saw the team partner with three different groups from the University of Saint La Salle (USLS): Balayan (the outreach arm of USLS), USLS College of Nursing, and USLS College of Medicine, to embark on various community outreach activities.

Together with the Balayan staff, they spent the first four days in Gawad Kalinga Lopue Legacy Village in Barangay Dulao, Bago City, conducting health screenings for the villagers. And to encourage the village to adopt healthier lifestyles, the team conducted cooking demonstrations, stretching exercises, and a dental health class for preschool children.

The next two days, team ISIP had the first-hand experience of working in an interprofessional team when they joined USLS College of Nursing in their home visits as part of the Community Health Nursing Attachment at Barangay Granada. Working hand-in-hand with the nursing students, they set up health profiles and administered health assessments for the residents, whilst taking the opportunity to build rapport with the residents, and learning more about their local health services.

"We learnt to be more creative in the way we interacted with the residents," shared Ms Zhang Pei Ting, second-year LKC Medicine student who went on the trip. "(In this way) we can gain their trust, and share with them our little medical knowledge that can help promote healthy living."

The highlight of the trip was when the team visited Barangay Tibsoc in the town of San Enrique, Negros Occidental, where they met the only public health doctor assigned to the village of 24,000. Despite the lack of medical services, and how the villagers could only consult the doctor once a year, the team was heartened and inspired by the doctor's dedication to her calling as a medical professional.

"This has been an extremely eye-opening trip and we look forward to sharing our time, effort and dedication to where there is an opportunity for us next," said Ms Zhang.



^ LKC Medicine students teaching preschool children dental hygiene.



< Team ISIP with the USLS College of Nursing students.

