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National Healthcare Group POLYCLINICS

Transforming PRIMARY CARE

ISSUE 06 2019

Advancing Wound Care Through TRAINING & RESEARCH



CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE AT NURSES' MERIT AWARD 2019

PLAYING HOST TO INTERNATIONAL DELEGATES

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

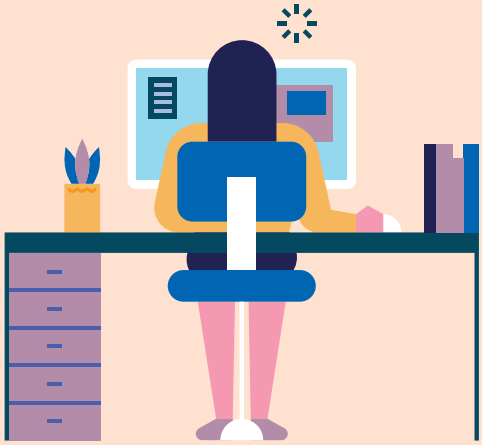
Hello

EDITOR'S NOTE

In August, the National Healthcare Group Polyclinics (NHGP) celebrated the contributions of our nurses and their unrelenting collective effort to ensure quality patient-centred healthcare. Indeed, while the role of nurses has evolved over the decades, they continue to be relevant in the ever-changing healthcare landscape.

Today, nurses play many roles across the spectrum of care in NHGP, such as driving the delivery of primary care services by spearheading research, conducting training and reviewing policies. As part of remembering our everyday heroes, we spoke to Senior Staff Nurse Magdalene Lee, who shared her motivations to undertake primary care nursing. We also turn the spotlight on wound management, a key specialty of NHGP's Nursing Services and how our nurses are making their mark in the areas of training, research and the delivery of advanced wound management services.

This spirit of learning, growing and sharing of best practices and new ideas is also reflected in NHGP's on-going efforts in hosting international delegates. Check out our 'In & Around' section to read about how agencies such as the World Health Organization learn about NHGP's journey in transforming primary care through visits to our clinics.



In a bid to continuously strengthen its primary healthcare capabilities through collaboration and innovation, NHGP also organises the annual Primary Care Forum. This year, the Forum will be held on 11 and 12 October 2019, and will be themed 'Innovative Communities, Co-design for Quality'. We warmly invite the medical community to join us for this event for a day of learning, networking and ideation on how to make primary care better and safer for all.

Happy Reading!

The Editorial Team

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Advancing Wound Care Through TRAINING & RESEARCH

Structured training, comprehensive research, and the adoption of best practices of wound care have raised the standard of wound care at the National Healthcare Group Polyclinics (NHGP).





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Wounds, as one of the most common conditions seen and treated by nurses in primary care, have become increasingly complex over time. To address this, the National Healthcare Group Polyclinics (NHGP) has made a concerted effort to build up its wound care capabilities.

The Role of Nurses in Wound Care

"In NHGP, wound care nurses are equipped to provide holistic care and empower patients to self-manage their wounds," explained Ms Chen Yee Chui, Chief Nurse, Nursing Services. "Wound care is a well-established specialty in nursing and requires intensive training."

NHGP sees close to 500 visits for wound care services daily. Many patients require repeated wound care visits for cleaning and treatment to promote healing. Among the many types of wounds seen at NHGP, diabetic foot ulcers are the most common. They are also the most challenging wounds to treat.

Diabetes can lead to neuropathy or nerve damage in the lower limbs. This means cuts or sores in the legs and feet can go unnoticed and untreated. Complications of diabetes, which include poor blood flow and poor wound healing, increase the likelihood of these wounds progressing into chronic or slow-healing ulcers. Once a diabetic foot ulcer develops, healing is hindered. The risk of severe infection and amputation also increases.

Wound care nurses play an important role in treating and managing diabetic foot ulcers to prevent complications. This involves the holistic management of patients' wounds by a multi-disciplinary team comprising wound care nurses, family physicians, podiatrists, care managers and medical social workers.

COMMON WOUNDS IN PRIMARY CARE

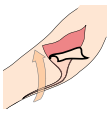
Acute Wounds



Abrasions



Lacerations



Skin Tear

Chronic Wounds



Diabetic Foot Ulcers



Chronic Leg Ulcers



Pressure Injuries

Raising Clinical Capability and Leadership in Wound Management

All nurses in NHGP undergo a Foundational Wound Care Programme, which trains them to further develop their wound management capabilities. Through this programme, NHGP has raised the standard of structured training and research in wound management over the years (learn more about NHGP's wound care journey in the milestone diagram on Page 5).

Today, close to 20 nurses have completed structured training in NHGP's Advanced Course in Wound Management for Registered Nurses, to develop their in-depth wound care knowledge. Among them, four have been awarded scholarships to pursue a Graduate Diploma in Wound Management. Together, they form part of NHGP's Wound Care Community of Practice team, creating a platform for sharing best practices, wound case management and research projects.

This team has also taken the lead in wound management, guiding fellow nurses to provide safe and quality wound care services in NHGP. They have also raised the standard of wound management through conducting research pertinent to wound management.

Beyond these pursuits, NHGP wound nurses are also given opportunities to attend local and international conferences. Such platforms offer networking and learning opportunities from international wound care experts, as well as enables NHGP to share its wound care practice.

Together, these efforts have aided NHGP to develop capability and clinical leadership in wound management in a primary care setting. Ms Julia Zhu, Nurse Clinician (Wound Care) shares, "Through training, research and the adoption of best practices, we can better raise the standard and quality of wound care to ensure the optimal outcomes for patients."





NHGP's Research on Wound Care

Effectiveness of Nurse-Led Wound Clinic on Clinical Outcomes for Patients with Chronic Leg Ulcers
Julia Zhu, Goh Ling Jia, Lim Voon Hooi

Results from this study showed a higher reduction rate in wound size for patients under Nurse-Led Wound Clinic (NLWC) compared to those under Standard Wound Care Service (SWC). Patients cared by NLWC also showed faster healing rate than those under SWC. These findings suggest that NLWC produces better clinical outcomes and improved Health Related Quality of Life among patients. Results also point to nurses feeling empowered to practise at the top of their licence to deliver higher levels of care to the population, resulting in efficient allocation of healthcare resources.

Exploring Patients and Caregivers Perceptions of Managing Wound at Home for Patients with Simple Acute Wound in the Primary Healthcare Sector
Goh Ling Jia, Julia Zhu

This study found that most patients were willing to care for their wounds at home, but cautioned that the elderly or patients with limited mobility should take extra care in doing so. Prior to allowing patients to perform wound dressing at home, a nurse assesses the patient's ability to perform wound dressing at home. Once patients are trained, they then enjoy the flexibility and convenience of changing wound dressing immediately as needed.

"Wound care nurses treat diabetic foot ulcers with cleaning and wound care products. Nurses also conduct comprehensive patient and wound assessment with evidence-based frameworks, help patients establish a wound care plan and evaluate care outcomes."

– MS JULIA ZHU, NURSE CLINICIAN (WOUND CARE), NURSING SERVICES

GROWING NHGP'S WOUND CARE EXPERTISE



2019

- NHGP shared its wound research findings at the Diabetic Foot Australia 2019 Conference in September

2018

- NHGP started its first research collaboration with Nanyang Technological University's Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine on a study titled 'Health Economics Burden of Chronic Wounds in Singapore'
- Ms Julia Zhu became NHGP's first nurse researcher to be awarded a Centre for Primary Health Care Research and Innovation grant to conduct a wound care-related research titled 'Experiences of Patients with Diabetic Lower Limb Amputation in Primary Care'

2017

- Wound Care Nurses Ms Julia Zhu and Senior Staff Nurse Ms Ervina Lee were awarded the Strategic Nursing Development Programme for overseas clinical attachment with NHS in UK
- NHGP organised the inaugural Managing Diabetic Foot Ulcer from Nursing Perspectives in Primary Care Workshop

2016

- NHGP's research titled 'When Can I be Free from My Miserable Leg? Experiences of Patients with Chronic Leg Ulcer' was presented at the third Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Conference, held in London. The paper was subsequently published in a peer reviewed journal titled 'International Archives of Nursing and Health Care'

2015

- The third NHGP Advanced Course on Wound Management for Registered Nurses was held
- NHGP's poster titled 'Experiences of Patients with Chronic Leg Ulcer in Primary Care' won the Best Poster Award in the Singapore Nursing Research Competition at the 2015 Singapore Health and Biomedical Congress

2014

- NHGP adopted a multi-disciplinary team wound care model in managing chronic complex wound cases

2013

- The second NHGP Advanced Course on Wound Management for Registered Nurses was held

2012

- Nine registered nurses graduated from the NHGP Advance Wound course on Wound Management
- The NHGP Wound Care Community of Practice (CoP) was formed

2011

- NHGP held the first run of its Advanced Course on Wound Management for Registered Nurses
- Training comprised 42 hours of classroom theory and 1 week of clinical attachment

PROUD MOMENTS

Asian Hospital Management Awards 2019

For its various efforts to transform primary healthcare, NHGP was conferred two Excellence Awards in the 'Community Involvement' and 'Facility Management and Financial Improvement' categories at the Asian Hospital Management Awards (AHMA) on 12 September 2019.

In the 'Community Involvement' category, NHGP's entry, titled 'From Clinic to Community – Starting a Weight Management Conversation in the Clinic and Supporting Lifestyle Modification in the Community', showcased NHGP's efforts to enhance patient activation for therapeutic lifestyle modification. Additionally, NHGP's entry for the 'Facility Management and Financial Improvement' category, titled 'Re-Development of Ang Mo Kio and Yishun Polyclinics to Increase Patient Capacity & Improve Patient Care Delivery', showed how NHGP's careful design and planning, coupled with improved work processes, enabled it to achieve highly desirable outcomes for its patients, leading to a significant improvement in how patients managed their conditions.

National Day Awards 2019

Five NHGP staff received National Day Honours at the National Day Awards 2019. Ms Chang Lee Peng, Assistant Director, Finance, Mr Derek Chiew, Assistant Director, Human Resource, Ms Tan Seok Peng, Manager, Operations, and Ms Kavitha D/O Parada Rahu, Assistant Manager, Human Resource, were awarded the Efficiency Medal for their exceptional efficiency and devotion to duty, while Ms Alice Wong, Executive, Finance was awarded the Long Service Medal for her 29 years of service.

Nurses' Merit Award 2019

On 17 July 2019, Ms Elane Zhang, Nurse Manager at Yishun Polyclinic, and Ms De Roza Jacqueline Giovanna, Nurse Clinician at Geylang Polyclinic, received the Nurses' Merit Award from Mr Gan Kim Yong, Minister for Health, at the Nurses' Merit Award 2019 presentation ceremony.



△ NHG and NHGP senior staff members showing support to Ms De Roza Jacqueline Giovanna (third from right) and Ms Elane Zhang (second from right) at the Nurses' Merit Award presentation ceremony.



△ Mr Ryan Ang (left) and Ms Soh Ying Hua (right) received the Excellence Awards on behalf of NHGP at the AHMA 2019.

The award is given by the Ministry of Health (MOH) in recognition of nurses' outstanding performance and dedication to the profession. Nurses are nominated by their healthcare institutions and selected by a panel set up by MOH.

Public Sector Transformation Awards 2019

NHGP received double recognition at the Public Service Transformation (PST) Awards 2019. Ms Sharon Chen, Deputy Director of Operations, was conferred the 'Exemplary Leader Award' for her dedication and excellent service, while Dr Dong Lijuan, Deputy Director of Nursing Services, was conferred the 'Exemplary SkillsFuture @ Public Service Award' for embodying the spirit of continuous learning and skills upgrading of self and others.



△ Ms Sharon Chen (second from left) and Dr Dong Lijuan (second from right) received their awards at the PST Awards Reception on 19 July 2019.

"Lijuan is a passionate leader and a role model for continuous learning. She has played a pivotal role in the development of primary care nursing in NHGP and in advancing nursing education in Singapore."

– MS CHEN YEE CHUI
CHIEF NURSE, NURSING SERVICES
NATIONAL HEALTHCARE GROUP POLYCLINICS

"Sharon is a model transformational leader who is a fervent trailblazer and trendsetter in IT adoption. She focuses on developing her staff to realise their fullest potential."

– DR SIMON LEE
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER AND CHIEF CLINICAL INFORMATICS OFFICER
NATIONAL HEALTHCARE GROUP POLYCLINICS

HOSTING INTERNATIONAL DELEGATES

JCI Consultant Visit to Yishun Polyclinic

In collaboration with the Singapore Healthcare Improvement Network (SHINe) Office, NHGP hosted Mr Michael Chihoski, a consultant with Joint Commission International's (JCI) Environment of Care, on 7 May 2019. Co-ordinated by the Quality and Patient Safety (QPS) Department and held at Yishun Polyclinic, Mr Chihoski shared pointers on environmental health and safety, and identified potential areas of improvement in the multi-storey healthcare facility.

SCPMG Visit to Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic

NHGP welcomed a delegation from the Southern California Permanente Medical Group (SCPMG), a subsidiary of American care consortium Kaiser Permanente (KP), at Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic on 8 May 2019. The delegates were given an overview of NHGP's role in primary healthcare and the teamlet care model and given a tour of the clinic. KP also shared an overview of their care delivery model, and their approach to primary care and population health, as well as how their electronic medical records (EMR), called KP HealthConnect, were used to deliver better care to patients and effect better health outcomes. It was a session where both parties learnt much from each other.



△ NHGP Senior Management members and staff with SCPMG delegates.



△ Mr Chihoski (front row, 4th from right) with NHGP staff, and members of other healthcare institutions.



△ The ICNC delegates were hosted by Dr Dong Lijuan, Assistant Director of Nursing Services, Mr Richard Low, Assistant Director of Nursing Services, and the Ang Mo Kio Nursing team.



△ The WHO delegation with Senior Management members and staff at Yishun Polyclinic.

Delegates from the World Health Organization

NHGP hosted two thought leaders, Dr Takeshi Kasai, Regional Director of the World Health Organization Western Pacific Region Office (WHO WPRO), and Dr Ying-Ru Jacqueline Lo, WHO Representative for Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam and Singapore, on 12 July 2019 at Yishun Polyclinic. The delegation learnt about the history and transformation of primary care in Singapore. The visit ended with a clinic tour and an interactive discussion.

Delegation from the International Council of Nursing Congress

On 2 July 2019, NHGP hosted a group of nursing delegates from Chile, China, Denmark, Germany, Korea and Peru at Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic. The delegation was in Singapore for the bi-annual International Council of Nursing Congress (ICNC). During their visit, the delegates learnt about how NHGP leveraged information technology to implement innovative models of care, and the different primary care nursing initiatives available to patients.



All in a DAY'S WORK

In conjunction with Nurses' Day, we caught up with Ms Magdalene Lee, Senior Staff Nurse at Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic. She shares about what goes on behind-the-scenes in a typical day, and her motivations for her nursing journey.

△ Senior Staff Nurse Ms Magdalene Lee Yen Ling, Primary Care Network (PCN) Nurse, Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic

What is a Primary Care Network (PCN), and the role of a nurse supporting it?

PCNs are networks of General Practitioners (GPs) whose goal is to manage patients' chronic conditions holistically. Such networks are supported by nurses and care coordinators. The role of a PCN nurse therefore includes assessing patients' medication adherence, social lifestyles, and dietary habits. By doing so, we aim to provide patient education for better self-management.

For instance, we teach patients how to administer insulin and self-monitor their blood pressure and glucose. Performing diabetic foot checks regularly is also essential to avoid foot complications. If necessary, we will also kickstart discussions with GPs and patients on community resources such as Family Care Centres.

How were you inspired to take on this new role as a PCN nurse?

Bringing care closer to home for patients with chronic conditions was something that resonated with me. Hence, taking up this new role was something that came naturally. My role as a PCN nurse allows me to reach out to more patients in the community and provide them with support for their chronic conditions.

Describe a day in the life of a PCN nurse.

A typical day for me would comprise patient education through face-to-face sessions, which can include educating them on their conditions, reviewing of their dietary habits, as well as exploring their motivation to exercise.

I also ensure patients go for their annual foot checks and also encourage them to measure their blood pressure and monitor their glucose from home. This way, patients are empowered for self-efficacy, and increase their confidence level to achieve optimal self-management of their chronic conditions.

Share some of the challenges faced, and how you overcame these challenges.

Building rapport, good relationships and trust with both GPs and Care Coordinators are crucial and require time and good communication skills. This can pose a challenge at times as I have to adjust to different working styles. In addition, as PCN nurses need to travel to different GP clinics frequently, we need to be quick on our feet, and learn to adapt to different environments fast. That said, in the process of overcoming these challenges, I have built up my resilience and developed a 'growth' mindset.

PRIMARY CARE FORUM 2019

PRIMARY CARE: INNOVATIVE COMMUNITIES CO-DESIGN FOR QUALITY

11 October 2019
Max Atria @ Singapore EXPO
Peridot Rooms 205-206

12 October 2019
Centre for Healthcare Innovation
Halls 2 and 3

Plenary 1:
The Interplay of Primary Care and Social Determinants

Plenary 2:
Co-designing for Health : Giving Voice to the Patient

GP Symposium:
Emerging Challenges for Family Physicians

Symposium 1:
From Healthcare to Health Heading Upstream

Symposium 2:
From Ideas To Reality : Quality by Design

Organised by:
PCA Primary Care Academy
Adding years of healthy life

In conjunction with:
Singapore Health & Biomedical Congress 2019

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