



MCI (P) 049/05/2020



HEALTHCARE HEROES, ASSEMBLE!

04
LEADERSHIP
CHANGE AT NNI

12
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
ABOUT BRAIN TUMOURS

14
CARING FOR MY
MOTHER WITH DEMENTIA

PUBLISHER

National Neuroscience Institute,
SingHealth

EDITORIAL TEAM

Janet Lau
Adriel Lee
Margaret Perry

ADDRESS

NeusLink c/o Corporate
Communications
National Neuroscience Institute
11 Jalan Tan Tock Seng
Singapore 308433
Tel: (65) 6357 7153
Email:
corporatecommunications@nni.com.sg
Website: www.nni.com.sg

PUBLISHING AGENT

ThinkFarm Pte Ltd
www.thinkfarm.sg

**FOLLOW US ON
SOCIAL MEDIA**

- nni.sg
- nni.sg
- NNI Singapore



9



20

CONTENTS



4 **A CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP**
Messages from the outgoing and incoming Medical Directors of NNI

6 **HEALTHCARE HEROES, ASSEMBLE!**
NNI staff volunteer at the COVID-19 frontline

10 **10 RISING TO THE CHALLENGES OF COVID-19**
Video consultations and home medication delivery help keep patients safe

12 **5 FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BRAIN TUMOURS**
Brain tumour basics that everyone should know



14 **“WILL YOU TAKE CARE OF ME?”**
Janet Koh shares how she copes with taking care of her aged mother who has dementia

17 **LIVING WELL WITH PARKINSON'S DISEASE**
Watch what you eat – it may affect your medication

18 **18 PUTTING PATIENTS AT THE HEART OF ALL WE DO**
32 NNI staff recognised with this year's Singapore Health Quality Service Award



20 **20 NURSES – THE HEARTBEAT OF HEALTHCARE**
Introducing Senior Enrolled Nurse Roslina Binte Rahim, a Tan Chin Tuan Award winner in 2019

21 **21 WHAT'S COOKING?**
NNI staff cook up a storm at the Willing Hearts soup kitchen



21

22 **22 CARE IN THE COMMUNITY**
Directory of organisations that support people living with brain and nerve conditions

23 **23 WHAT WOULD YOU DO?**
NNI Fund eases the financial burden of patients in need



A PRIVILEGE TO SERVE

After serving as NNI's Medical Director for six years, Associate Professor Ng Wai Hoe is moving to Changi General Hospital to be its Chief Executive Officer. He shares how patients have shaped his 22-year career, and why they will always be at the heart of all he does.

"The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say 'thank you'. In between, the leader is a servant."

— Max DePree



Early in my career, I operated on a patient who had a cancerous brain tumour. Although the surgery went well, the tumour reoccurred quickly and she deteriorated rapidly. I spent a lot of time with the patient's relatives in the intensive care unit, explaining that further surgery would provide no relief, and that there was a need to focus on the patient's quality of life and alleviating her suffering. Later that day, I was having a drink in the hospital's cafe when a very emotional man handed me a soya bean drink. He was the patient's son, and he wanted to thank me for looking after his mother. That simple gesture taught me a valuable lesson: although there are times when there is little we can do medically to help our patients, we can always provide care and comfort, and this is deeply appreciated by patients and their family members.

“Having spent my whole career thus far at NNI, it was a tough decision to leave.”

— A/Prof Ng Wai Hoe

This is one of many lessons my patients and their caregivers have taught me during my 22 years at NNI. It has been a privilege to care for them, and gratifying to see the swift results of a successful operation. It is therefore not surprising that many people have asked me why I am moving into healthcare administration — considered by many doctors as the 'dark side' of medicine.

As a clinician leader, I am blessed to have the best of a few worlds. I am able to continue caring and performing surgery on patients, teach and inspire the next generation of doctors, discover new and novel treatments — all while driving changes in the healthcare system that benefit future generations. It is exhilarating and deeply satisfying to be able to see immediate health outcomes in my patients, and plan long-term strategies and systems that have more lasting and enduring impact.

As Medical Director of NNI, I have enjoyed the support of a strong team, and that has helped me to develop a caring and innovative culture to advance neuroscience care. Having spent my whole career thus far at NNI, it was a tough decision to leave, but the pain is eased knowing that it is in the highly capable hands of A/Prof Au Wing Lok, a clinician who cares deeply for this institution, and its patients and people.

Thank you for joining me on such a meaningful and wonderful journey these past six years. It has been a real privilege to serve you.

INTRODUCING OUR NEW MEDICAL DIRECTOR

Associate Professor Au Wing Lok took over as Medical Director, NNI, on 1 July 2020. *NeusLink* caught up with the Senior Consultant Neurologist to find out more about him and his plans for NNI.

When did you join NNI?

I joined NNI in 2000 as a registrar to do my specialist training in neurology, then sub-specialised in Parkinson's disease (PD) and movement disorders. These are complex and challenging conditions to manage and live with, yet I'm constantly inspired by patients who prove that, with a positive mindset and strong support, life can still carry on with happiness and meaning.

What are some of the challenges NNI faces in caring for people with brain and nerve conditions?

There is still a lot about neuroscience that we do not know, and many debilitating neurological conditions currently have no cure. While we continue to learn more about these diseases and search for cures, I urge NNI staff to take a step back and listen to our patients, to look at them as individuals with unique physical and psychosocial challenges, and provide innovative care tailored to each patient's needs.

How have you developed services to serve patients better?

PD affects all aspects of daily life, from walking and talking to getting dressed and eating. Specialist nurses, neurologists and allied health professionals, such as physiotherapists and occupational therapists, can teach

patients ways to cope with these challenges, but attending multiple hospital appointments is difficult for people with movement disorders. In 2007, together with nurses and allied health professionals, we initiated the Community Care Partners Programme for PD, which was Singapore's first-ever organised outreach programme for the PD community. We delivered training workshops for community health professionals, so patients with PD can access care closer to home. Today, more than 20 community partners are involved, and we hope to expand it to other neurological conditions, such as dementia, multiple sclerosis, and motor neuron disease.

What is your vision for NNI's next chapter?

It should not be a vision of any single person, but a collective vision. I am looking forward to write the next chapter together with all in NNI. However, patients will continue to be at the heart of all we do, and their needs will set the direction for our way forward.

How do you like to wind down after a busy day?

My free time is spent with my two lovely daughters — we make art and craft, play with dolls, and watch cartoons. They even teach me how to sing and dance!

“I urge NNI staff to take a step back and listen to our patients, to look at them as individuals with unique physical and psychosocial challenges.”

— A/Prof Au Wing Lok



HEALTHCARE HEROES, ASSEMBLE!

When SingHealth called for volunteers to help fight COVID-19, NNI answered! From doctors and nurses to researchers and administrative staff, more than 60 NNI staff stepped forward to fight the virus.



Nurse Clinician Ng Hwee Lan performing a swab test on a resident at the Community Care Facility at Singapore EXPO

Volunteer numbers

Total staff deployed: 64
(up to 12 May, with gaps in between)



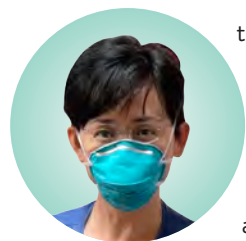
Deployment locations

- Foreign Worker dormitories
- Other hospitals and healthcare institutions e.g. SGH, NCID, CGH
- Community Care Facility at Singapore EXPO
- Swab Isolation Facilities

This was made possible by reducing clinics and surgeries to free up staff for deployment.



Dr Ivy Ho usually spends her working hours overseeing research to find new treatments for brain tumours and neuroblastomas. But for two weeks in April and May, the Principal Investigator at NNI's Research Department swapped her precision research lab for the frontline of the COVID-19 outbreak.



they planned the patient flow. This included deciding where to set up the waiting area, what the patient's route to the various counters would be, and taking registration. "We worked outdoors and donned full PPE at all times, which was challenging, especially with our hot and humid weather. After a while, it felt like a marathon run, and it was a relief to be able to take a short break in a cool space," she recounts.

When SingHealth asked for volunteers, Dr Ho responded, and was soon activated to be part of the SingHealth Mobile Medical Team deployed at S11@Punggol, one of the first foreign worker dormitories to report cases among its residents. "While I received prior training in infection control as part of my work in the research laboratory, there was, nevertheless, a certain apprehension when the activation call came," she shares.

Dr Ho took up the challenge and was assigned to assist the administrative team in patient registration, where

Many NNI staff members volunteered to serve at the frontline, and 64 were deployed. From conducting swab tests to providing logistical support, staff volunteers were united with a common sense of duty: to save lives and serve our nation. Despite the difficulties, what kept volunteers like Dr Ho going was seeing patients get the treatment they needed to recover. "It has been a truly humbling experience to serve alongside other volunteers. I wholeheartedly salute their dedication and all our frontline fighters from our healthcare system."

Dr Benjamin Huang
Neurosurgery @ TTSH Campus
Posted to National Centre for Infectious Diseases



"It was very heart-warming to see all the senior consultants, senior nurses and various heads of departments stepping in to work on the ground with us. In the face of COVID-19, rank just disappears."

Colleen Wong
Human Resource
Posted to Command Centre Headquarters



"The strong camaraderie forged among us is the best takeaway from this experience!"

Jennifer Baisa Canceran
Neurodiagnostic Laboratory
Posted to Jurong Penjuru Dormitory



"Though it was tough work, it was worth it. My health has been good these years, so volunteering is my way of paying it forward."

Eddy Jamal
Corporate Communications
Posted to SingHealth – Dormitory Medical Operations Team
"It has been a fruitful journey to be part of the team providing operational support and ensuring a conducive environment for the medical team. To me, every single bit of contribution counts, be it on the frontline or behind the scenes."



Tay Lee Lian
Operations
Posted to a Swab Isolation Facility



"I remember a migrant worker suddenly broke down after a routine doctor's review and refused to go back to his room as he felt lonely and scared. A nurse and I sat with him and lent a listening ear while trying to cheer him up. We were so glad when we finally saw a smile on his face."

Liang Yi Ran
Operations
Posted to a Swab Isolation Facility
"People relied on me to churn out lots of documents within minutes! I learnt to stay calm during such urgent situations and to still find time to check my work. It was a good learning experience."



Tanya Marie Choong
Nursing
Posted to Singapore General Hospital Ward 74



"After 17 years, it was back to bedside nursing. I'm glad for this chance to practise my bedside skills again and help lighten the load of SGH colleagues. There were a few miracle moments when uncommunicative patients who were reliant on feeding tubes gradually recovered and started communicating!"

Prof Louis Tan
Neurology @ TTSH Campus
Posted to Community Care Facility at Singapore EXPO
"It has been a privilege to work alongside our NNI nurses and other healthcare professionals from the SingHealth family. It has been an enriching and eye-opening experience for me."



Dr Tushar Gosavi Divakar
Neurology @ SGH Campus
Posted to Jurong Penjuru Dormitory



"It was humbling to do something for the community when help was most needed. Giving a few kind words of reassurance to the worried-looking workers who came to the medical post was a fulfilling experience. I will cherish these memories for years to come."

OVERCOMING FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN WITH HOPE AND TEAMWORK

Dr Sonu Sumit Kumar, Senior Resident, Department of Neurology, NNI @ Singapore General Hospital (SGH) campus, was posted to the SGH isolation ward for COVID-19 patients. There, he formed a special bond with the migrant workers under his care.

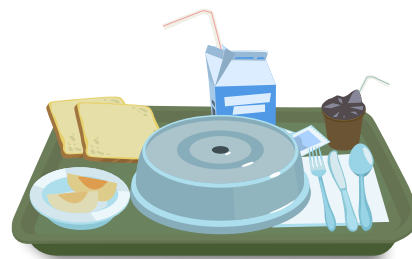
In the isolation ward, I attended mostly to migrant workers, many of whom were from India, my country of origin. Even though I am not from the same regional background, I was able to understand and speak their language well. This helped to create rapport and trust between us. They started calling me 'anna' (meaning 'brother') instead of 'doctor', which touched my heart.

With this open communication, we found out some of their key concerns:

01 FEAR OF THE VIRUS Most of them had mild symptoms, but they were seeing big hospital wards, staff in PPE, and various medical devices for the first time. The fear of the virus could be seen in their eyes. They thought that they may fall very ill and never recover. The team listened to their concerns and built rapport with them. With that, we were able to reassure them by giving them medical advice on outcome and recovery possibilities.

02 CONCERN FOR THEIR FAMILIES Some did not inform their families that they have been admitted, worrying that they would be afraid. They would stand in the corner of the wards to talk to their families over the phone, telling them that they were safe and still in the dormitories. We assured them that we would respect their privacy.

03 GETTING USED TO THE FOOD Some were not used to hospital food. When we told them that they could request for food they prefer, such as chapatti, smiles lit up on their faces.



04 WAGES AND MEDICAL BILLS They were afraid that medical expenses would pile up, that their wages would stop and push them to financial crisis. We assured them that the Singapore government will pay for treatment, and that they can receive support from our psychologists via videoconference.

Once these concerns were settled, they became more open and involved in discussions on their management plans. Working in the COVID-19 ward made me understand that the psychological aspect of disease are very important and should be addressed from the beginning. Although COVID-19 brings out fear of the unknown, it can be alleviated by taking time to listen, care for individual needs, and offer comfort beyond medical management.



AT THE FOREFRONT OF PROTECTING STAFF AND PATIENTS

Senior Staff Nurse Nur Nazaria Baharudin was ready to fight COVID-19 even before the first case was diagnosed in Singapore. As the nursing lead in NNI's infection control committee, Nazaria was involved in planning infection control policies, and ensured that all NNI staff were fitted with N95 masks so that they would be well protected against the coronavirus. In mid-April, Nazaria headed to the frontline.



When NNI called for volunteers in April, I asked my husband for his support and blessing, then immediately submitted my name. My first deployment was to the Fever Screening Area at Singapore General Hospital (SGH). Knowing that I would be exposed to suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19 left me excited yet worried. However, being familiar with infection control policies assured me that I had the protection I needed. Thereafter, I was posted to different dormitories for two weeks to assist doctors doing swab tests for migrant workers. It was not easy battling the heat, wearing full personal protective equipment (PPE), and working under the hot sun for hours. I would be fully

drenched in sweat each time I removed my PPE! There was also a language barrier with the migrant workers, but we improvised by using simple English and body language. Yet I survived the challenging working conditions, and always felt satisfied at the end of the day, knowing that we were making a difference. I am now deployed to the community care facility at Singapore EXPO, where we work in shifts. After working regular clinic hours for more than 10 years, I was worried that I would not be able to cope with the 12-hour work days while wearing full PPE. But I have adapted to the working conditions and the reality is okay after all. This experience has been a real eye-opener for me, and has softened my heart towards migrant workers. They have laboured hard for Singapore, and it is now time for us to take care of their well-being and nurse them back to health.

RISING TO THE CHALLENGES OF COVID-19

COVID-19 prompted NNI to find innovative ways to continue caring for patients while keeping them and staff safe. These include one that allows patients to consult doctors from the comfort of their home.

When Mr Tan* saw his NNI specialist earlier this year, he did so from the comfort of his own home. He is one of more than 30 NNI patients who have had follow-up consultations over the internet. “It was a very good video consultation; because of the current COVID-19 situation, it was also very convenient. A/Prof Kevin Tan helped and listened to me and my wife very carefully, and could guide us through the consultation even though we were not there in person.”

In January, NNI began piloting a video consultation service for two sub-specialties: epilepsy and dementia. COVID-19 pushed the project forward at a quicker pace, opening up the service for all suitable patients, regardless of their condition.

The service helps to reduce face-to-face contact and therefore lowers the risk of exposure to infectious disease. It is also a convenient way for patients to seek medical help and reduces the time spent at the hospital or clinic, including travelling time, waiting for consultation, and collection of medication.

“With technology, we now have new ways of doing things that previously were not possible. Our patients’ needs are always our first consideration – we take measures to secure the video conferencing platform so that patients’ data are safe and remain confidential,” says Dr Shermyn Neo, Consultant, Department of Neurology, NNI, who led the planning and implementation of video consultation in NNI. “Patients have shared that they find it easy to use, and the care they receive is similar to that of a face-to-face consultation.”

Video consultation is currently available at NNI @ Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH).

“Patients have shared that they find it easy to use, and the care they receive is similar to that of a face-to-face consultation.”



A team of Patient Service Associates (PSAs) are doubling up as coordinators to guide patients through the video consultation process. Eunice Thng, Senior PSA, leads the team. Here, she answers the questions patients most frequently ask.

Q: How can I switch my appointment to a video consultation?

A: Video consultation is not suitable for all patients (see the box story located below). If you are interested, tell your specialist at your next appointment, and he or she will be able to advise if it is suitable for managing your condition.

Q: Can I use my phone for the consultation?

A: A laptop or computer with internet access is preferred because doctors may conduct a physical examination, such as hand movement, which requires both hands to be free. However, tablets and smart phones with internet access can also be used.

Q: Is the online system safe?

A: The video consultation uses Zoom, a secure online video conferencing platform.

Q: Are the consultation sessions recorded?

A: To protect the privacy of our patients and caregivers, video consultations are not recorded.

Q: How do I collect my medications?

A: We will arrange for the medications to be sent to you after your video consultation (see box story below).

Q: Will my medical records be updated?

A: Your medical records will be updated in our system after your consultation.

Q: What are the fees for a video consultation?

A: The fees are the same as for your current consultation charges.

Q: Can I pay using MediSave or MediFund?

A: No, not at present.

Who is suitable for video consultation?

Video consultation may be suitable for patients who:

- are in stable neurological condition
- do not require laboratory or other investigations prior to consultation
- have stable medications with no change in medication dosage at last clinic visit
- are able to communicate medical history, and undergo physical examination and medical counselling during the video consultation
- have had least one face-to-face consultation at the NNI Neuroscience Clinic within the last 12 months



Medication delivery service

Did you know that you can choose to have medication delivered to your home, office or neighbourhood? This can help greatly with social distancing and cuts the amount of time you need to spend during your hospital appointment. For more information, scan the QR codes below:



NNI @ SGH Campus



NNI @ TTSH Campus

5 FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BRAIN TUMOURS

The thought of having a brain tumour is frightening, but knowing the signs and seeking early treatment can improve the chances of recovery. Dr Wan Kai Rui, Senior Resident, Department of Neurosurgery, NNI @ SGH, shares brain tumour basics that everyone should know.

1



ANYONE CAN GET A BRAIN TUMOUR

From babies to the elderly, brain tumours can affect anyone at any age. In Singapore, about 500 adults and 40 children undergo surgery every year to remove a brain tumour. Brain tumours are the second most common type of cancer in children after leukaemias.

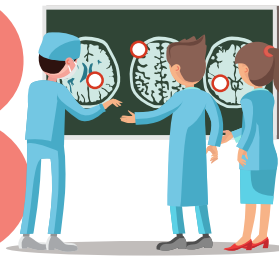
2



THERE ARE MORE THAN 120 TYPES OF BRAIN TUMOURS

A brain tumour is an abnormal growth of cells beneath the skull. Since there are many different types of cells within the brain, this leads to many different types of brain tumours. Surgery is often the mainstay of treatment for brain tumours.

3



NOT ALL BRAIN TUMOURS ARE CANCEROUS

Some brain tumours are cancerous (malignant) while others are non-cancerous (benign). There are important differences between the two (see chart). Cancerous brain tumours are often deadly; non-cancerous brain tumours can also kill if left untreated because, as they grow, they can damage vital parts of the brain.

CANCEROUS (MALIGNANT) BRAIN TUMOURS...

start in the brain (primary tumour) or spread to the brain from other parts of the body eg breast, lung or bowel (secondary tumour)

often grow quickly

can spread to other parts of the brain or the spinal cord

may grow back even if removed completely during surgery

may require radiotherapy or chemotherapy after surgery

NON-CANCEROUS (BENIGN) BRAIN TUMOURS...

always start in the brain

usually grow slowly

usually do not spread to other parts of the brain or body

are less likely to grow back if removed completely during surgery

usually do not require radiotherapy or chemotherapy after surgery

may turn cancerous (malignant)

4

SYMPTOMS VARY, DEPENDING ON A TUMOUR'S SIZE AND LOCATION

As a tumour grows inside the skull, it causes increased pressure on the brain.

Common symptoms include:

- recurring headache that is worse in the morning
- increased drowsiness
- nausea and vomiting
- seizures

Other symptoms can also occur, depending on where the tumour is located.



FRONTAL LOBE
personality change, mood disorders, memory deficits, weakness in arms/legs

PARIETAL LOBE
numbness, language deficits, problems with counting

OCCIPITAL LOBE
sight problems eg blurred/double vision

TEMPORAL LOBE
behaviour changes, memory deficits, language deficits, auras

CEREBELLUM
poor balance & coordination, decreased nerve function eg decreased hearing, facial weakness/pain



5



KNOW WHEN TO SEE A DOCTOR

If you have persistent symptoms as described above, see your family doctor and ask about being referred to a specialist. The chances of you having a brain tumour are low but still possible. Remember — early diagnosis and treatment improve the chances of recovery.

“WILL YOU TAKE CARE OF ME?”

Janet Koh's life was changed forever after her mother posed that question to her.

When her 86-year-old mother, Mdm Ng Sook Cheng, suffered a stroke in 2010, Janet Koh, then 54, left her job to care for her mother full-time. She thought it would be, at most, a two-year arrangement; little did she know that it would eventually turn into a long-term commitment.

Since then, Mdm Ng has experienced a second massive stroke that has paralysed the right side of her body, and developed dementia that is now in the severe stage.

Life has changed greatly for Janet over these last 10 years. The decisions she makes now revolve largely around Mdm Ng. Still, she has no regrets. “My mother used to say that when we were sick, she would feel sad. I can empathise with her now,” Janet says.

Initially, Janet found the change in the mother-daughter relationship hard to get used to. “I had to take on the parental role. She'd taken care of me all her life and now I'm taking care of her,” shares Janet. She also made home adaptations so that it was safer and easier for Mdm Ng to move around. For example, she installed a non-slip bathroom floor, and ensures that their home is uncluttered.



Today, struggling with immobility, incontinence and difficulty swallowing, Mdm Ng is fully dependent on Janet. While memory loss is a well-known symptom of dementia, Mdm Ng also experiences mood swings, becoming agitated easily.

Managing her mother's dementia has been a learning journey for Janet. While she had not known much about the condition, that quickly changed after her mother's diagnosis. Janet threw herself into learning as much as she could about dementia so that she would know what to expect, and be able to provide the best care for her mother. She also credits support groups for helping her become a more effective caregiver.

“I had to take on the parental role. She'd taken care of me all her life and now I'm taking care of her.”

”

To give back to the community and spread awareness of dementia, Janet has given many talks on caregiving, sharing her experience and things she has learnt along the way. Janet has even found time to attend courses on palliative care and dementia so that she can upgrade her skills in caregiving.

The toughest part about caring for her mother, admits Janet, is watching Mdm Ng's mind deteriorate to the point where she

is sometimes unable to recognise Janet. To cope, Janet takes one day of the week to care just for herself — catching up with friends and doing activities that she enjoys, such as reading. She also reminds herself that Mdm Ng's behaviour is due to dementia, not the person. “My mother may have forgotten what has happened, but she can still enjoy herself in the moment. She can still feel my touch and my love.”

“My mother may have forgotten what has happened, but she can still enjoy herself in the moment. She can still feel my touch and my love.”

”

JANET'S SELF-CARE TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS

- Watch out for signs of burnout, such as fatigue and insomnia.
- Practise self-care — take some time away regularly to focus on yourself and do things that you enjoy.
- Learn to accept help from family and friends — keep a list of specific things that they can help with.
- Join support groups — share and learn from others who are in a similar position.
- Explore available resources for caregiving, such as community services for home care (eg home-based rehabilitation, speech therapy) to enhance care.
- Find a friend to talk to — sharing your emotions and what you are going through can help to relieve stress.
- Maintain a sense of humour — see the funny side of things and try to stay positive.



CARING FOR PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA



A truly inspiring woman, Janet was one of the recipients of the Healthcare Humanity Awards this year. With close to a decade's worth of experience caring for her mother, Janet shares these tips for fellow caregivers who are looking after loved ones with dementia.

- Try to see things from their perspective – they may be experiencing a world that is different from someone who does not have dementia.
- Focus on what they can do instead of what they cannot. Affirm them and find joy in small successes.
- Focus on what they feel rather than what they remember. Respect and empathise with their emotions.
- Make legal and financial plans early while they are still able to voice their opinions.

“
Be organised and stay on top of daily chores – a build-up of chores can lead to additional stress. List down things to do and set realistic goals.
 ”

- Be involved in caring and loving them so that they feel safe and comfortable.
- Speak simply and be straightforward – use short sentences with one main point in each sentence.
- Be organised and stay on top of daily chores – a build-up of chores can lead to additional stress. List down things to do and set realistic goals.
- Bring them for outings by various organisations (eg Alzheimer's Disease Association*), so that they have social interaction with others.
- Learn as much as you can about dementia – attend talks or take up courses whenever you can to keep yourself updated on the latest information about the disease.

* for more details on Alzheimer's Disease Association, turn to page 22

LIVING WELL WITH PARKINSON'S DISEASE

Did you know that what you eat can affect your Parkinson's medication? Wong Siew Li, Principal Dietitian at Tan Tock Seng Hospital, explains how to time your meals and medication.

Levodopa is often prescribed for people with Parkinson's disease (PD) to manage symptoms such as tremors, stiffness and slowness of movement. However, taking protein-rich foods together with levodopa can interfere with the absorption of the medication into the bloodstream. This prevents the brain from receiving the full dose of levodopa, so symptoms are less well-controlled. Aim to take levodopa at least 30 minutes before meals to get the best out of the medication.



- Protein is broken down into amino acids in the body.
- These amino acids compete with levodopa for absorption in the small intestine.
- This prevents the body from absorbing the full dose of levodopa, making it more difficult to control symptoms.



For more tips, read the essential guide to living well with PD!

To purchase, contact Parkinson Society Singapore
ADDRESS: The Parkinson Centre
 191 Bishan Street 13 #01-415 Singapore 570191
TEL: 6353 5338 **EMAIL:** info@parkinson.org.sg
OPENING HOURS: 8am-5pm (closed on Saturdays, Sundays and PH)

The book is available in both English and Mandarin at \$20 a copy.

Or borrow from your local library



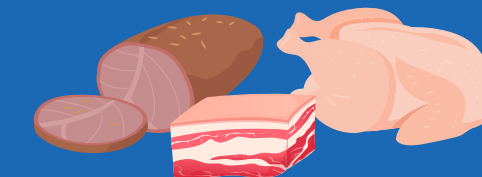
English copy:



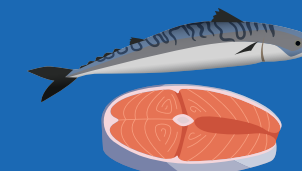
Mandarin copy:



HIGH-PROTEIN FOODS INCLUDE:



Meat (eg: chicken, pork, beef)



Fish



Eggs



Dairy products (eg: milk, cheese, yogurt)



Soy products (eg: tofu, soymilk)

PUTTING PATIENTS AT THE HEART OF ALL WE DO

The Singapore Health Quality Service Award recognises and celebrates exemplary efforts of healthcare professionals in improving the patient experience. This January, the award was given to 32 NNI staff who serve with passion and love.



HO THYE SIN

**Principal Radiographer
Neuroradiology**

"I am honoured to receive this award. It came from the hard work and dedication of my team. My job involves explaining and performing neuroradiological procedures to patients. I always emphasise good communication because it helps us understand patients' needs, expectations and safety concerns. It is always rewarding to see a satisfied patient who appreciates our service."



JASON LAU KIAN WEE

**Principal Radiographer
Neuroradiology**

"Reporting for shift is akin to a daily adventure because no one can predict what can happen that day. Though my interaction with a patient may be transient, I believe in serving with sincerity. Service excellence starts from our words and actions. My aim is for patients to always leave the scan room with a positive, memorable experience that they will remember and associate with NNI."



IVY YIP LAI LIM

**Medical Technologist
Neurodiagnostic Laboratory**

"I love my job because I get to take care of patients and be a source of support to them. I feel happy helping patients feel calm and comfortable before and after diagnostic tests. I am thankful to be working with great colleagues, who are like my family. Receiving this award is an acknowledgment of my service, and encourages me to do my job even better every day."



TAN EYOK YIAN

**Medical Technologist
Neurodiagnostic Laboratory**

"I feel very happy and honoured to receive this award. My maxim in serving patients is to serve others as you would have them serve you. I remember a patient who baked cookies for me after she was discharged from hospital. She did not leave her name, just a Thank You note. Until today, I still do not know who she was, but this kind gesture meant a lot to me."

NNI Recipients of Singapore Health Quality Service Award 2020

STAR AWARD WINNERS

Neurodiagnostic Laboratory

Ivy Yip Lai Lim
Medical Technologist
Michelle Li Mingrui
Senior Medical Technologist
Phua Ziqun
Senior Medical Technologist
Tan Eyok Yian
Medical Technologist
Tay Lian Bee
Senior Neuro Electrophysiologist

Neuroradiology

Ho Thye Sin
Principal Radiographer
Jason Lau Kian Wee
Principal Radiographer

GOLD AWARD WINNERS

Neuroradiology

Ainon Binte Jantan
Senior Patient Service Associate
Siti Sabariah Binte Mohamed Na'aim
Senior Patient Service Associate

Neuroscience Clinic

Fauziah Binte Amat
Patient Service Associate

SILVER AWARD WINNERS

Neurodiagnostic Laboratory

Chang Chao Li
Senior Neuro Electrophysiologist
Eng Sing Leng
Senior Medical Technologist
Linda Yong Mee Foon
Senior Medical Technologist

Neurology

Dr Ang Kexin
Consultant
Dr Lin Xuling
Consultant
Dr Ng Kok Pin
Consultant
Dr Seet Ying Hao Christopher
Associate Consultant
Dr Tan Yee-Leng
Senior Consultant
Dr Tu Tian Ming
Consultant

Neuroradiology

Jestase S/O Posman
Senior Radiography Assistant
Rosiah Binte Ismail
Healthcare Assistant



Neuroscience Clinic

Kek Lay Eng
Patient Service Associate
Siti Adilah Binte Ja'afar
Patient Service Associate
Tan Siew Sin Priscilla
Patient Service Associate
Teo Kar Leng Wendy
Senior Patient Service Associate

Neurosurgery

Dr Goh Jia Jun
Principal Resident Physician
Dr Lim Jiaxu
Senior Resident
Dr Low Yin Yee Sharon
Consultant

Nursing

Esther Vanessa Chua Ai Ling
Nurse Clinician
Lim Lay Hoon Linda
Senior Nurse Clinician
Zhang Aimei
Senior Staff Nurse



FAUZIAH BINTE AMAT

**Patient Service Associate
Neuroscience Clinic**

"Receiving this award motivates me to work harder and continue serving patients well. I am grateful to patients who take the time to compliment me through feedback forms as it is satisfying knowing they recognise my service. My motto is simple: to serve people the way you want others to serve you. I'm glad to work in NNI as it has taught me strength, confidence and perseverance."



DR ANG KEXIN

**Consultant
Neurology (TTSH campus)**

"Neuropalliative care is very demanding as it goes beyond medical treatment of physical symptoms. However, I always remember back to when I first joined NNI, when A/Prof Loh Ngai Kun encouraged us Medical Officers. He said that that even if we make just a small difference, it is worth it. His words have shaped my practice ever since."

NURSES – THE HEARTBEAT OF HEALTHCARE

One of our Senior Enrolled Nurses, Roslina Binte Rahim, received the 13th Tan Chin Tuan Award for Enrolled Nurses last November.

Nursing should not only challenge you intellectually, but emotionally as well. Never give up on anyone as every day is a miracle.” This is one of the beliefs that Senior Enrolled Nurse Roslina Binte Rahim (SEN Roslina) has held on to throughout her nursing career.

She was recognised at the 13th Tan Chin Tuan Award for Enrolled Nurses – the highest accolade for enrolled nurses that recognises outstanding performance and commitment to the nursing profession. SEN Roslina was one of just 10 enrolled nurses in Singapore to receive the award in 2019.

“I am thankful to the nursing lead who nominated and gave me this opportunity. It makes me feel proud, happy, overwhelmed and delighted.

It is also an acknowledgment of a job well done. To me, this award is not mine alone; it goes to NNI and all the enrolled nurses,” says SEN Roslina.

During her 23 years as a nurse, SEN Roslina has faced many challenges, including the 2003 SARS outbreak, when she was working at Tan Tock Seng Hospital.

In 2010, SEN Roslina joined NNI’s Neuroscience Outpatient Clinic; last year, she took on a new role as a Neurosurgery specialty nurse. She now manages head injury patients, and assists in shunts verification or adjustment for patients with hydrocephalus to regulate fluid in their brain.

SEN Roslina is passionate about her work, and cares deeply about her patients’ well-being. “I want to encourage anyone out there who wishes to be a nurse to step forward – being a nurse is not only a duty; it is a calling.”



SEN Roslina received her award from Dr Amy Khor, Senior Minister of State for Health.



“I want to encourage anyone out there who wishes to be a nurse to step forward – being a nurse is not only a duty; it is a calling.”



WHAT'S COOKING?

NNI staff spent a Saturday in January slicing, sorting and stirring at the Willing Hearts soup kitchen. The 29 doctors, nurses, researchers and administrators were part of an army of volunteers who prepared 6,500 meals for those in need – an achievement Willing Hearts manages 365 days a year! NNI Care to Serve Day is held every year, bringing staff together to give back to society.



Care in the COMMUNITY

These organisations provide advice and support to help you and your loved ones live better with brain and nerve conditions.



ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE ASSOCIATION

(65) 6377 0700
www.alz.org.sg



BRAIN TUMOUR SOCIETY (SINGAPORE)

(65) 8738 5669
enquiry@braintumoursociety.org.sg
www.braintumoursociety.org.sg



MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY ASSOCIATION (SINGAPORE)

(65) 6259 6933
mdas@mdas.org.sg
www.mdas.org.sg



BROKEN BRAINS

hello@brokenbrains.sg
www.brokenbrains.sg



PARKINSON SOCIETY SINGAPORE

(65) 6353 5338
info@parkinson.org.sg
www.parkinson.org.sg



GUILLAIN BARRE SYNDROME SINGAPORE

(65) 9673 1523
www.facebook.com/GBSSing



SINGAPORE EPILEPSY FOUNDATION

(65) 6336 9336
admin@epilepsy.com.sg
www.epilepsy.com.sg



HANDICAPS WELFARE ASSOCIATION

(65) 6254 3006
hwa@hwa.org.sg
www.hwa.org.sg



SINGAPORE NATIONAL STROKE ASSOCIATION

(65) 6222 9514
contact@snsa.org.sg
www.snsa.org.sg



What would you do?

Imagine having to choose between buying your wife an electric wheelchair and paying your child's university fees. One is vital for your spouse's independence and the other for your child's future.



Such a dilemma is very real for families that have a loved one living with Parkinson's disease, muscular dystrophy, or other neurological conditions, many of which currently have no cure and get worse over time. Sometimes patients have to switch to lower-paying jobs or are unable to work. Family members may also need to stop working to be their full-time carers. This results in a huge blow to their finances.

"I can say this with confidence, that my wife could only have survived because of the NNI Fund. Thank you so much from the bottom of my heart."

— Mr Suresh, caregiver to Mrs Suresh, who receives treatment at NNI for an autoimmune disease



What if there was a way to support such families? Would you be willing to help?

Make a difference today with a gift to the NNI Fund.

- Support needy patients battling diseases such as dementia, stroke, Parkinson's disease, and brain tumour
- Fund groundbreaking research to improve and transform care
- Educate future leaders in neuroscience

Scan the QR code for more information.



All qualifying donations made from now till 31 December 2021 (inclusive) are entitled to 250% tax deduction if NRIC is provided.

BRINGING CARE CLOSER TO YOU

Living with dementia, stroke, and other brain and nerve conditions is challenging.


That's why we bring care closer to you.


NNI specialists are based at six hospitals across Singapore, making it easier for you and your loved ones to receive treatment.

Find out more about NNI at our website and Facebook page.



 www.nni.com.sg

 [nni.sg](https://www.facebook.com/nni.sg)

 National Neuroscience Institute
SingHealth

CONTACT INFORMATION

NNI @ SGH Campus

Singapore General Hospital, Block 3, Clinic L
Outram Road, Singapore 169608
Main Tel: (65) 6222 3322
Appt Tel: (65) 6321 4377
Email: appointments@sgh.com.sg

NNI @ TTSH Campus

Tan Tock Seng Hospital, NNI Block,
Neuroscience Clinic
11 Jalan Tan Tock Seng, Singapore 308433
Main Tel: (65) 6357 7153
Appt Tel: (65) 6330 6363
Email: appointments@nni.com.sg

NNI @ CGH

Changi General Hospital
2 Simei Street 3
Singapore 529889
Appt Tel: (65) 6850 3333

NNI @ KKH

KK Women's & Children's Hospital
100 Bukit Timah Road
Singapore 229899
Appt Tel: (65) 6294 4050

NNI @ KTPH

Kho Teck Puat Hospital
90 Yishun Central
Singapore 768828
Appt Tel: (65) 6555 8828

NNI @ SKH

Sengkang General Hospital
110 Sengkang East Way
Singapore 544886
Appt Tel: (65) 6930 6000



PATIENTS. AT THE HEART OF ALL WE DO.®

