On 2 September 2020, National Skin Centre (NSC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Johnson & Johnson Singapore (J&J) to renew the strategic collaboration that was established three years ago. This MoU serves to augment NSC’s position as a leader for dermatology in the region. Since then, together with J&J, NSC has made great strides in dermatological care.

Over the past 3 years, this collaboration has bolstered dermatological knowledge and expertise for clinicians, nurses and pharmacists through educational support and continuing medical education. The collective multi-disciplinary efforts between J&J and NSC’s clinicians led to advancements in the holistic management of dermatology conditions, with milestones such as the development of the Psoriasis Binder for patient education, and the Psoriasis Area and Severity Index (PASI) ruler, an improved concise measurement of Psoriasis. Nurses and pharmacists were also upskilled in areas of skin disease management.

Moving forward, NSC’s renewed collaboration with J&J aims to transform the landscape of dermatological care in Singapore through innovative solutions, such as digital workshops and resources for patient education, to increase accessibility and empower patients to take the lead in their dermatological journey.

As a leader in dermatology care, NSC is dedicated to dermatological excellence over the years. Congratulations to the following NSC staff who were awarded the National Day Awards for their exemplary contributions and dedication to dermatological excellence over the years.

**The Commendation Medal (Military)**

Dr Pan Jiun Yit
Senior Consultant

Besides committing time to treat patients at National Skin Centre, Dr Pan Jiun Yit has stepped up to demonstrate strong leadership and dedicated service in the defence of Singapore with the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) as a National Serviceman. His outstanding performance and dedication to duty and service has been recognised by Ministry of Defence with the Commendation Medal (Military) being conferred upon him.

**The Efficiency Medal**

Mr Mohd Adnan
Nurse Clinician (DSC)

Jok Wan has been with NSC for the past 25 years and has exhibited a high level of administrative competence and a strong commitment to patient care. Jok Wan also displays qualities essential to the elevated perioperative nursing care, infection control and surgical skills in NSC. His outstanding performance and dedication to duty and service has been recognised by Ministry of Defence with the Efficiency Medal being conferred upon him.

**Ms Goh Ah May**
Senior Nurse Clinician

Senior Nurse Clinician, Goh Ah-May is well-regarded among colleagues for her wide-ranging contributions in developing new clinical services, managing the professional and personal development of staff members, and mentoring new nurses and young nurses. She has contributed significantly to the professional development of nurses in NSC through educational support and continuing medical education. In the past 18 years, her dedication to achieving excellence in all disciplines has elevated perioperative nursing care, infection control and surgical skills in NSC.

**Mr Victor Sin**
Manager, Support Services

Victor has been with NSC for the past 18 years. He manages the Centre’s building and facilities, mechanical and electrical (M&E) utilities, fire safety and security systems. Throughout the years, Victor has made great strides in ensuring the Centre’s facilities and work environment are of the highest quality, ensuring the Centre is always improved clinical efficiency through his consultative approach by aligning feedback from the teams to improve clinic processes.

**Ms Wong Jok Wan**
Executive Secretary (Admin)

Jok Wan has been with NSC for the past 25 years and has exhibited a high level of administrative competence and a strong commitment to patient care. Jok Wan also displays qualities essential to the elevated perioperative nursing care, infection control and surgical skills in NSC. His outstanding performance and dedication to duty and service has been recognised by Ministry of Defence with the Efficiency Medal being conferred upon him.

**Ms Wang Jak Wan**
Nurse Clinician (DSC)

Jok Wan has been with NSC for the past 25 years and has exhibited a high level of administrative competence and a strong commitment to patient care. Jok Wan also displays qualities essential to the elevated perioperative nursing care, infection control and surgical skills in NSC. His outstanding performance and dedication to duty and service has been recognised by Ministry of Defence with the Efficiency Medal being conferred upon him.

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**Sun Safety Habits – Should Be More Followed**

One of the most common skin issues that many of us might expect to encounter this skin tone. This exposure to the sun takes the form of redness, soreness, spots or blisters caused by sun damage.

The most common cause of uneven skin tone is sun exposure. Melanocytes, the cells that are responsible for giving our skin its colour, are stimulated by the sun to produce more melanin in response to Ultraviolet (UV) light. The immediate effect of this is a burning or sunburn. However, through repeated exposure to UV light, sun damage occurs through a loss of skin tightness and the development of wrinkles, dark spots and age spots.

Age is another factor that causes uneven skin tone. As we get older, our skin weakens. This affects the regularity of melanin production in our skin, hence irregular melanin production results in brown spots known as age spots.

Here are some tips to help you achieve an even skin tone.

**Maintain**

Applying moisturiser helps soothe the skin and prevents dryness and redness, especially if you have been out in the sun.

Avoid Excessive Sun Exposure and Use Necessary Sun Protection

Plan your day to avoid going outdoors between 10am and 4pm, when the sun is hottest. Wear a hat or use an umbrella if going outside is unavoidable, and wear clothes with UV protection, especially if you are going to be exposed to more than 1 hour daily. Finally, apply sunscreen to prevent your skin damage, which may lead to reddening and peeling from sunburns, and prevent the formation of sun spots such as freckles and solar lentigines.

If you spot unevenness in your skin tone, you might want to consult a dermatologist to assess your skin condition and identify the cause of it, as well as to seek appropriate treatments. Such treatments include:

1. **Lightening creams containing ingredients like Vitamin A derivatives, hydroquinone, licorice extract and kojic acid.**

2. **Oral antioxidants like polypodium leucotomos.**

3. **Facial peels that use glycolic acid.**

4. **Laser therapy to remove dark spots.**

Non-invasive treatments like chemical peels, intense pulsed light (IPL) and Pigment laser treatments can be used to lighten dark spots, but your dermatologist will assess the skin condition and choose the most appropriate treatment plan.

**Coping Mentally and Emotionally in Pandemic Times**

The pandemic has affected many people around the world. It has shaken the economy, social and family structures. The impact of quarantines, unemployment, working from home, social distancing and even job loss have left some of us feeling anxious, fearful and sometimes even isolated. It has been a few months, but most of us still find it hard to adjust to what is happening. If we find it hard to talk to our friends, caregivers or family members, it should be okay to speak to an experts.

Professional support is available through a number of agencies and organisations.

**Active Lifestyle**

Keeping physically active is beneficial for both physical and mental health. Regular exercise can help to reduce stress, improve mood, and increase your sense of well-being. Engage in aerobic activities such as jogging or swimming, or try new ones. For example, shaking hands may spread the virus. Instead, we could nod our heads, put our hand on our chest or do a new ritual. Take one day at a time and cherish all that we have now, the food that we eat, the people that we love, the job that we have and so on. Focus on activities and people that make us feel good mentally and emotionally. We do have a choice, so choose wisely.

**Relax**

When things do not go as planned, take a step back and breathe deeply. Try that pause button. Be in the moment. Focus on your breathing. Feel the air going into your lungs. Feel your lungs expand and contract as you exhale. Do this for about ten times. Notice how good it feels to be still and relaxed. Feel your lungs expand and contract as you exhale. Do this for about ten times. Notice how good it feels to be still and relaxed.

**Distanting from Social Media**

Social media has become an integral part of our daily lives. Whether it’s keeping in touch with friends, family or even new acquaintances, it’s hard to imagine life without social media. However, it’s important to be aware of the impact that social media can have on our mental health and wellbeing. Social media can be a source of both positive and negative information. It’s important to be mindful of how much time we spend on social media and consider taking breaks to prevent burnout.

While it may be an excellent source to keep us entertained and occupied, it may also cause stress. A lack of connection with others can be harmful to our mental health and wellbeing. It’s important to find time for ourselves and to take breaks from social media to recharge.

**Resources**

- National CARE Hotline: 1800 202 6868
- Samaritans of Singapore – 1800 221 4444
- Institute of Mental Health’s Mental Health Helpline – 6395 2222
- Fei Yue’s Online Counselling Service – www.ec2.sg
- TOUCHline (Counselling) – 1800 377 2252
- Care Corner Counselling Centre – 1800 353 5800
- Toucanline (Counselling) – 1800 377 2252
- National CARE Hotline: 1800 202 6868
- Samaritans of Singapore – 1800 221 4444
- Institute of Mental Health’s Mental Health Helpline – 6395 2222
- Fei Yue’s Online Counselling Service – www.ec2.sg