COVID-19 Surveillance Testing for Staff at NSC & DSC

To ensure the safety of all our staff, a one-time surveillance testing was conducted at National Skin Centre (NSC) and Department of Sexually Transmitted Infections (DSC) from 1 to 25 May 2021 and 18 to 20 May 2021, respectively. A total of 430 staff (351 from NSC and 35 from DSC) and 44 Non-NSC staff partners/vendors underwent the COVID-19 PCR swab test.

The combined efforts of the Infection Control Committee as well as Nursing, Clinical Operations (Reception and Rostering), Laboratory, Medical Affairs and Support Services departments, resulted in a smooth and efficient surveillance testing.

Help for Patients with Severe Skin Conditions

The Skin Aid for the Vulnerable and Elderly (SALVE) programme, supported through the National Skin Centre Health Fund (NSCHF), targets frequent admitters to the dermatology wards at acute hospitals. Patients with chronic relapsing skin diseases are supported with regular application of topical medications, to reduce the incidence of preventable re-admissions into acute care hospitals.

Mdm Kan FJ is 73 years old and lives alone as her husband is staying at a nursing home. She is blind in one eye and can barely see with the other. She has pemphigus, an immune-mediated condition that causes blisters to form on her skin, leaving behind raw sores that heal slowly if not treated. Being visually impaired, she is not able to manage her wounds herself. Our nurses help to tend her wounds.

Today, her condition is better and she is able to sleep comfortably without pain and discomfort. Through the SALVE programme, patients-in-need such as Mdm Kan are provided financial assistance and supported with clinical care in treating their skin conditions.

Give a gift, take that step to partner us to help Mdm Kan and others like her. To donate, please scan the QR code on the right.
Improved ‘Magic Mouthwash’ Formula

Certain groups of patients, including patients with immunocompromised conditions such as HIV/AIDS and other patients with cancer receiving chemotherapy, suffer from multiple painful mouth ulcers that greatly reduce the quality of life. As mouth ulcers can be intractable manifestations in these conditions, there is a need to manage them to reduce the pain, immunosuppression and opportunity for secondary infection to travel.

The Hydrocortisone, Nystatin, Difluprednate and Tetracycline (HNDT) medicated mouthwash was introduced in 2015 and prescribed to patients with pain and temporal discomfort. This mouthwash helps to reduce inflammation, numb the pain and prevent opportunistic infections in the oral cavity.

Due to the HNDT medicated mouthwash’s short shelf life of two weeks after compounding, the pharmacy at NSC was unable to prepare buffer stock for immediate fill of prescriptions, rendering it nearly impossible to prepare before the next day to fill prescriptions. In addition, many freshly compounded preparations are not used by patients, resulting in wastage of the pharmacists’ time, effort, and raw materials.

Between 2017 and 2018, NSC pharmacy collaborated with the National University of Singapore (NUS) Pharmacy School to look into the stability and antimicrobial activities of this mouthwash as an undergraduate final year project. Ms. Winnie Choo, Senior Pharmacist, who was part of the team working alongside professors and undergraduate students in the composition of the mouthwash.

The reformulation explorations to improve the shelf life of the mouthwash resulted in the successful reformulation of the formula. The stability and antimicrobial properties of the re-formulated formula was introduced in 2019 and the formula now renamed HND Dox (depicting doxycycline) medicated mouthwash.

Winnie added a further element by converting the preparation in replacement of tetracycline by the more stable doxycycline. The reformulation to improve the shelf life resulted professors and undergraduate students to improve the shelf life and one of the lead initiators of this project, worked alongside Winnie Choo, Senior Pharmacist, who was part of the team creating this medicated mouthwash as an undergraduate final year project. Ms. Winnie Choo, senior pharmacist, compounding the ‘Magic Mouthwash’ with continuing efforts of collaboration across professions”.

Winnie expresses, “I am appreciative of this collaboration with the research team. The success of reformulating and improving the formula has spurred Winnie on. She diligently continues her work and research.

Here is a list of oral vitamins and dietary products that may have beneficial sun-protection properties:

1. Carotenoids
   - Carotenoids are a group of compounds that are commonly found in a food diet such as fruits, vegetables, juices and wines. Studies have shown that they can protect against UV-induced DNA damage, reduce inflammation and cell death, appear to display antioxidant activities, reduce premature skin ageing and may modify the response of the immune system.

2. Polyphenols
   - Polyphenols are a large family of naturally occurring plant products and are widely distributed in plant foods such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, bark and seeds.

3. Vitamin C and E
   - UV light damages DNA in the epidermis, causing cell death, cell mutation and skin cancer. Vitamin C and E are fat-soluble antioxidants that provide sun protection to our skin, but do you know that what we eat may help in reducing damage to our skin?

4. Green Tea
   - Green tea is a popular tea and is known for its beneficial properties. The polyphenols in green tea can protect against UV-induced DNA damage.

Applying sunscreen and sunblock provide us protection to our skin, but do you know that what we eat may help in reducing damage to our skin?

Prolonged and repeated exposure to UV radiation leads to skin damage and skin cancer. This exposure can increase the risk of developing skin cancer. Certain antioxidants have been shown to prevent UV-induced skin damage.

Carotenoids are a group of antioxidants that are commonly found in fruits and vegetables. They can help reduce inflammation and cell death, appear to display antioxidant activities, reduce premature skin ageing and may modify the response of the immune system. Studies have shown that they can protect against UV-induced DNA damage.

Polyphenols are a large family of naturally occurring plant products and are widely distributed in plant foods such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, bark and seeds. Experimental and epidemiological studies have suggested that polyphenols can modify the response of the immune system, help with DNA repair, exhibit anti-inflammatory effects. They are a promising group of compounds that can be exploited as sun-protection agents. Green tea, with its high concentration of polyphenols, absorbs UV radiation.

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