NHG Awards Ceremony 2017

Ms Madalene Yeo, Corporate Communications Executive

Tele-DERM receives the NHG Team Recognition Award (Gold)

At the 2017 National Healthcare Group (NHG) Awards ceremony held at Tan Tock Seng Hospital on 12 July 2017, Tele-DERM, the National Skin Centre (NSC) ‘s collaborative project with National Healthcare Group Polyclinics (NHGP) was awarded the NHG Team Recognition Award (Gold). The annual award ceremony honours outstanding individuals and teams for their efforts in improving the quality of healthcare in Singapore. Aiming to provide greater accessibility to skin care for the community at primary-care level, Tele-DERM services were rolled out across the NHG Polyclinics.

Tele-DERM team members include NSC Consultants Dr Heng Yee Kiat and Dr Tan Wei Sheng, Clinic Operations Manager Mr Johnny Foo, MIS Manager Ms Ngan Ai Khim and our fellow NHGP colleagues Dr Kong Jing Wen, Deputy Head of Hougang Polyclinic and Dr Simon Lee, Chief Medical Informatics Officer, NHGP.

“Working as part of the Tele-DERM project team, I had the opportunity to visit all the NHG Polyclinics and get to know the dermatology champions. This made subsequent interactions for the project smoother. It was also through the on-site induction from the family physicians that we were able to understand some of the challenges primary-care physicians face when they need to refer their patients to the specialist centres. With the implementation of Tele-DERM, this process facilitates the escalation of referrals and provides an avenue to manage the cases in a timelier manner. A closer working relationship is also fostered between the dermatologists and the family physicians” said Mr Johnny Foo.

Dr Martin Chio awarded the NHG Education Leaders Award

At the awards ceremony, Senior Consultant Dr Martin Chio was also lauded for his dedication to teaching. The NHG Education Leaders Award recognises NHG staff with leadership roles in various areas relevant to education. Apart from sharing knowledge and expertise, these individuals also possess emotional capabilities to lead and inspire people to achieve excellence in their specialised field.

As an expert on Sexually Transmitted Infections, Dr Chio is the head of DSC (Department of Sexually Transmitted Infections Control Clinic), overseeing STI education and teaching programmes under the Dermatology Residency Programme. He is also the Chairman for the Chapter of Dermatologists at the Academy of Medicine in Singapore.
GP Engagement Session: Shared Care Partnership
Dr Hazel Oon, Consultant
Mrs Tang Lee Foon, Head of Pharmacy

A General Practitioners’ (GP) engagement session on the shared care partnership between NSC and GPs in primary care was held in NSC on 22 July 2017. The “Shared Care Partnership” workshop which focused on the right-siting of common skin conditions was attended by 26 GPs in private practice, Family Medicine Centres and polyclinic doctors.

In her opening address, A/Prof Tan Suat Hoon highlighted the rationale of having stable dermatology patients to be right-sited into the community for continued management. While freeing NSC as a tertiary centre to handle more complex cases, GP partners benefit by increasing their clinical experience in dermatology and patients enjoy convenience and shorter wait times. The NSC Chronic Skin Diseases Right-Siting (CSDR) programme which started with rightsiting of stable psoriasis patients, now includes other stable cases of eczema, acne, urticaria and androgenetic alopecia. A/Prof Tan also shared how Tele-DERM implemented at the NHG Polyclinics has helped in keeping patients with mild skin conditions for appropriate care at the primary care environment and reducing unnecessary referrals to NSC.

Lively case-based interactive discussions were delivered by the NSC Consultants during the seminar.

Dr Hazel Oon, Deputy Head of Psoriasis Clinic and Acne Clinic shared on the management of scalp psoriasis, comorbidities of psoriasis such as psoriatic arthritis and its quick screening tool –PEST questionnaire as well as the metabolic and psychiatric disorders.

Dr Oon also spoke about severity grading for acne and treatment guidelines, emphasising the need for antimicrobial stewardship when prescribing topical and oral antibiotics. Acne mimickers such as hidradenitis suppurativa, keloids and pityrosporum folliculitis were also discussed during the session.

Interesting cases studies on eczema were brought up by Dr Yew Yik Weng, Head of Eczema Clinic. Dr Yew presented on the complications of eczema including oral and topical steroid complications. Skin care routines together with practical and cost-effective tips for the management of eczema offered by Dr Yew were appreciated.

In the sharing on urticaria by Dr Tee Shiang Ian, Head of Urticaria Clinic, he spoke about the differences between angioedema, acute and chronic urticaria. Pathogenesis and appropriate treatment was also discussed. Dr Tee highlighted the importance of differentiating urticaria from urticarial vasculitis and concluded with a clear treatment algorithm on optimising management of urticaria.

Following the discussion presentations from the NSC Consultants, Mrs Tang Lee Foon, Co-Chairperson of the CSDR and Head of NSC Pharmacy presented on the logistics of medication supplies in the CSDR. Mrs Tang shared on the drugs commonly prescribed for stable cases of the skin conditions in the CSDR programme and how NSC patients in the right-siting programme would continue to enjoy free courier services for medications from NSC Pharmacy.

At the seminar, GP Partners were also invited to share with NSC their experiences with managing right-sited patients in the community. Dr Kong Jing Wen, Deputy Head Hougang Polyclinic at NHGP and Dermatology Specialist Advisory Group (SAG) In-charge, expounded on his enriching experience as well as the steep learning curve faced. Dr Kong noted that a number of these right-sited patients also had chronic medical comorbidities, for example hypertension, hyperlipidaemia and hepatitis B. As such, cases were co-managed rather than right-sited completely to primary care, as dermatological input from NSC is still required.

Right-siting is an important initiative whereby patients and doctors can both benefit from the holistic care provided by general practitioners. Caring for patients with mild and stable chronic skin disease in the community is progressively becoming the norm.

Nursing Seminar: “Crown of Glory” – Happier YOU!
Sister Kong Kim Yoke, Nurse Clinician

Our nursing seminar themed ‘Crown of Glory - Happier YOU!’ was held on 1st July 2017 at the NSC Auditorium. The event saw 68 participants from the various institutions including nursing staff from private hospitals as well as intermediate and long term care institutions.

During the session, Senior Consultants Dr Joyce Lee and Dr Angeline Yong shared on the causes of hair loss and what techniques can be used for hair restoration. Participants at the seminar were also provided with nursing insights on treatment modalities for hair loss, which was presented by Senior Staff Nurse Ms Tang Seok Han Esther. In the last segment of the forum, Senior Medical Technologist Mr Lee Cheng Bock detailed the investigations for hair loss that take place in the laboratory.

The seminar received positive feedback from the participants. “I am glad to learn about the different treatment options available for people suffering from hair loss. The session was indeed enlightening” commented Mrs. Alice Cheong from All Saints Nursing Home.
MOH Nurses Merit Awards (Ryan Chua)

Mr Chua Rong Yue Ryan, Senior Staff Nurse

On 7 July 2017, 100 nurses were presented the Nurses’ Merit Award during the annual award ceremony which honours nurses for their contributions and preeminent performance in the nursing profession. Senior Staff Nurse Mr Chua Rong Yue Ryan was one of the deserving recipients of the 2017 Nurses’ Merit Award. The award was presented by Mr Gan Kim Yong, Minister for Health.

“It is not farfetched to say that nurses are the cornerstone in patient care management. We play vital roles in helping patients in their recovery to optimal health, and we invest the same time and effort in them as we would for our own family. In short, nurses help make people better – this is what inspired me to become one.

In my seven years of nursing, I have been fortunately blessed with plenty of learning opportunities to grow and develop myself, both on the personal and the professional aspect. Bolstered with organisational support from the National Skin Centre, I was able to obtain a Masters scholarship in Clinical Research, and was also given the chance to educate the public via community outreach initiatives, organise training seminars for fellow nurses and grow the Dermatology Nursing Chapter under the Singapore Nurses Association.

I believe these are all important roles that nurses play to aggregate and foster society’s health education. I am also heartened and proud to learn from nurses from other countries that Singapore’s healthcare sector is internationally renowned. This motivates me to continue to play my part in helping to further reinforce our nation’s nursing reputation and develop more cohesive community care.

The Nurses’ Merit Award is both an immense privilege and testament to my work. I hope to continue devoting my time and effort in shaping Singapore’s shifting healthcare landscape into a sustainable and progressive one.”

Quality Improvement Lunch

Mr Lee Jun Yue, Quality Executive

The second Quality Improvement Lunch of the year was held on 28 June 2017 with the focus on Gearing Up for the Future. The event lined up a showcase of the various quality improvement projects that took place recently at NSC. Using this common platform for all NSC colleagues, innovative ideas and new work processes were shared to ensure dissemination and sustainability regardless of the magnitude of the improvement works.

A/Prof Tan Suat Hoon, Director of NSC, kicked off the event by sharing an update on the SHINE initiative. The large scale initiative that has been taking place over the past three years at NSC attained remarkable results in the promotion of hand hygiene in NSC. It has seen an increase in hand hygiene compliance rate for doctors in the second moment of hand hygiene (Washing Hands Before a Procedure). To sustain this improvement, patients are also educated on hand hygiene and encouraged to question our staff if the latter had practised hand hygiene.

Following the opening address, Ms Loo Swee Cheng, General Manager and Data Protection Officer, provided a quick refresher on the Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA), “Protection of patients’ information is nothing new in NSC. With news of cyber security breaches worldwide in recent months, it is beyond doubt that the storage of personal information is vulnerable and NSC will do our due diligence to upkeep the safety of all our patients’ data”, said Miss Loo.

During the last session of the lunch time event, Ms Zainab Mohideen, Junior Medical Technologist, shared the winning 6S project on “Improvised Blood Tube Colour Chart for Nurses and Lab Technicians”. Based on the visual management technique taught during the 6S training, the team created a simple blood tube colour chart on common blood tests. This easy reference has assisted lab staff and nurses when they are unsure.
Skin Facts – Hair Transplant
Ms Madalene Yeo, Corporate Communications Executive

Androgenetic alopecia is a common problem affecting both men and women alike. Male pattern hair loss affects nearly all men at some point in their lives and although perceived as a cosmetic issue by many, can have a significant negative psychosocial impact on one’s life. Medical treatments available include topical minoxidil and oral medications such as oral finasteride. For female pattern hair loss, there are other oral medications being used such as spironolactone.

With more extensive patterns of hair loss however, surgical options such as hair restoration are an integral part of the multifaceted approach. It involves the surgical movement of “permanent” dihydrotestosterone-resistant hair from the safe donor zone in the back and/or sides of the scalp to the thinning or balding areas. Once transplanted, the hair will continue to grow for a person’s lifetime.

Other than being used to treat androgenetic alopecia, hair restoration surgery is also useful for the treatment of cicatricial alopecias such as those induced by previous surgeries, radiation, or even conditions such as triangular alopecia and aplasia cutis.

Principles of hair restoration surgery - Follicular Unit Transplantation (FUT)

FUT is a surgical procedure where hair is transplanted from the permanent “safe donor zone” - the area in the back and sides of the scalp where hair is more resistant to balding, to the bald or balding areas of the scalp. This is accomplished using naturally-occurring groups of 1, 2, 3, or 4 hairs, called follicular units. Follicular units can be obtained via A) strip harvesting method or B) follicular unit extraction (FUE).

A) Strip harvesting method

For the strip harvesting method, the doctor removes a strip of tissue from the safe donor zone area, and stitches this back together to form a thin linear scar. Once extracted, the donor strip is cut into many individual follicular units using microscopic dissection techniques.

Benefits of strip harvesting include the ability to harvest a larger number of grafts in one session, higher graft survival rates due to more robust grafts as compared to those obtained with FUE, lower follicle transection rates, and a higher maximum follicular unit graft yield over the patient’s lifetime when compared with FUE. On a cost-benefit ratio strip harvesting is a more cost effective procedure.

B) Follicular Unit Extraction (FUE) method

Using FUE, each individual follicular unit is chosen and taken directly from the scalp, rather than from a strip of donor tissue. The follicular units are excised from the scalp using a small, sharp cylindrical punch (generally 0.8mm to 1.2mm in diameter), which incises the skin surface around each hair follicle before they are carefully teased out manually with forceps.

Benefits include no permanent linear scar, decreased healing time, few limits on post-operative activity, and is a viable alternative if there is decreased scalp laxity. It is also useful if limited numbers of grafts are needed (for example in a small case such as a transplantation into scar tissue or eyebrows), and is also useful for utilising body hair (for body hair transplantation) in patients with insufficient scalp donor hair.

Your doctor will recommend the most suitable method of harvesting based on your characteristics and preferences.