

# SingVision

A PUBLICATION OF SINGAPORE NATIONAL EYE CENTRE

2012



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# Doing us proud!

Congratulations to our colleagues who received the **Singapore Health Quality Service Award**.

This award was initiated by SingHealth in 2011 to honour healthcare professionals in the public and private sectors who have demonstrated commitment to delivering quality care and excellent service. Singapore National Eye Centre's staff received a total of 30 awards (1 Star, 5 Gold, 24 Silver).



SILVER Award

**Madam Zabaria bte Yusoff**  
*Senior Patient Care Assistant*

Ms Yusoff's cheerful disposition and positive attitude have not gone unnoticed. She has been working in SNEC for 12 years now and enjoys her daily interaction with patients who come from all walks of life.

Her duties as a senior patient care assistant are to register the patients when they arrive for their medical appointments, process payments and schedule further appointments if they need to see their doctors again.

Each day when she comes to work, she tells herself that it is up to her to bring a smile to the people that she meets.

"I get my inspiration from my mother who has eight children. Despite the difficulties, she is very patient and kind hearted."



GOLD Award

**Ms Linda Chan**  
*Quality Service Executive*

Ms Linda Chan, an executive with Quality Service Department has been working in SNEC since 1996. In all this time, she found that the best way of handling situations when patients get angry or upset is to put herself in their shoes.

"I don't take their nasty remarks to heart because they are upset and just want a solution. And I try to understand their situation and help them as best as I can," says Ms Chan.

When patients call over the phone with a request or to express their concern over something, she tries to handle the situation without having to transfer or redirect the call to another colleague or department.

Ms Chan says: "It gives me great satisfaction when I'm able to do this because if I were a patient I'd be annoyed and irritated if I were to be sent from pillar to post."

And when she comes across patients who are diagnosed with severe eye conditions which can cause them to lose their vision, she will comfort them and tell them to stay positive.

**SHS QUALITY SERVICE AWARD  
EXCEED EXPECTATIONS  
THE HALLMARK OF EXCELLENCE**



Members of the SingHealth Group





**STAR GOLD**

Dr Daniel Su  
Dr Kelvin Lee  
Ms Linda Chan  
Ms Teng Siew Kuan Corne  
Ms Annie Yeo

**SILVER**

Prof Donald Tan Prof Aung Tin Dr Sonal Farzavandi Dr Alicia How Dr Audrey Looi  
Ms Tay Li Kheng Ms Zelyn Sim Ms Leong Tuck May Ms Ng Quee Lan Jenny Ms Yoo Yinn Bing Evelyn  
Ms Tan Sok Kian Ms Tan Gook Eng Emill Ms Lim Yen Ling Ms Li Feng Xia Ms Lim Su Li  
Ms Zabara Bte Yusoff Ms Karen Liew Ms Madeline Tan Ms Tan Lay San Carin Ms Kkairandio Thangpal  
Ms Adeline Ho Ms Nurhayati Bte Tahir Ms Sam Pui Yee Layn Ms Tay Soh Wah



Artwork done by Ms Cindy Tan (Quality Service Dept)



**GOLD Award**

**Dr Kelvin Lee**  
*Consultant, Glaucoma Service*

Dr Kelvin Lee chose to be a doctor for the simple reason that he is "able to treat patients and patients benefit from the treatment." As an ophthalmologist, Dr Lee understands his patients' anxiety when they consult him and their fear of going blind as a result of certain eye conditions. "From experience you can tailor your patient education and counselling so that patients' anxiety is also addressed and not just their clinical condition," says Dr Lee.

According to Dr Lee, the medical profession is considered a noble one as it deals with the health and condition of human beings. He says: "As such the trust placed on us by patients to do the right thing should not be abused."



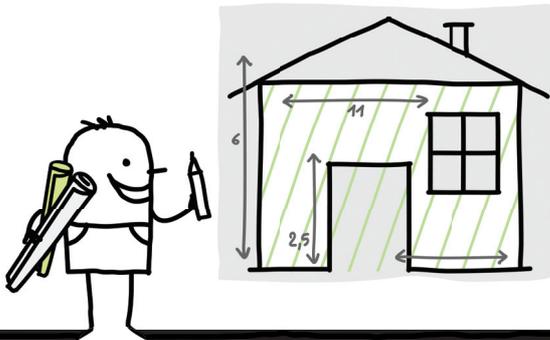
**SILVER Award**

**Ms Jenny Ng**  
*Senior Staff Nurse*

Working as a staff nurse in the day ward, Ms Jenny Ng has learnt to multi-task and not lose focus.

"Instead of becoming overwhelmed and feeling frustrated, I tell myself to stay calm and not lose my patience. This way, I come across to patients and visitors as being self-confident, and they are more likely to respect and listen to me," says Ms Ng.

Her greatest satisfaction is seeing the smiles on patients and knowing that she has in her own way made an impact in their lives.



# Serving patients better

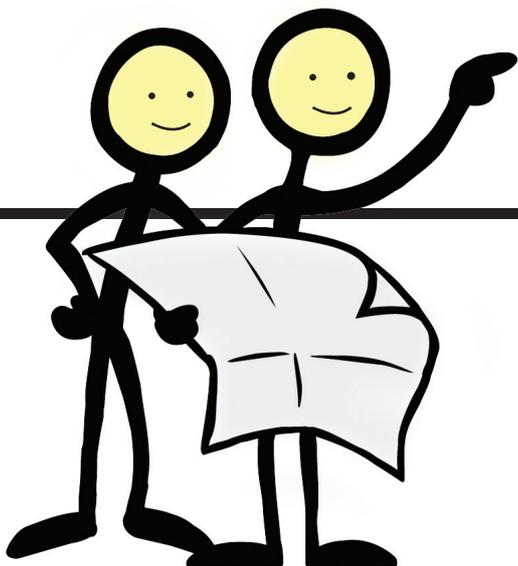
Our subsidised clinics have been recently renovated to cater to the increasing volume of patients and to create a better environment for them.

On an average, these clinics attend to about 600 patients a day. With an ageing population, patient attendance is expected to increase. Prior to the renovation, patients often had to be accommodated in cramped waiting areas.

Now, patients wait in greater comfort in a more spacious waiting area with increased seating capacity. The number of consultation rooms has also been increased from six to nine to cut down on the waiting time for patients to see their doctors.

The result – more happy patients!

One of them, Ms Wong Sou Mui, 43 said: “Previously there were not enough seats when the clinic was crowded. Often I ended up standing around while waiting to see my doctor. Now that it is more spacious and comfortable, I can wait in comfort.”



Before ...



*Cramped waiting areas and not enough seats*



After ...



*More spacious waiting areas and increased seating capacity*





## Our Malaysian visitors

Ms Khadijatul Marhamah (fifth from right) with Ms Charity Wai, COO, SNEC and Ms Nurazua Abu Bakar (third from right)

Others (L-R): SNC Aw Ai Tee, SNC Eunice Loh, DDN Tan Joon Fong, DDN Margaret Tan, DDN Lim Mein Chee, DN Low Siew Ngim and SNM Fang Lai Mei

# Sharing our expertise and knowledge

As a leading eye care institution in the region, Singapore National Eye Centre (SNEC) is a strong advocate of sharing expertise and knowledge to elevate the standards of eye care locally and internationally.

Over the years, the Centre has trained hundreds of local and overseas doctors, nurses and allied health professionals in both ophthalmology and nursing.

Recently, two nurses, Ms Khadijatul Marhamah and Ms Nurazua Abu Bakar from Malaysia were on attachment at the SNEC from February 13 to 24. Ms Khadijatul, acting nursing manager and Ms Nurazua, acting nursing sister are from The Tun Hussein Onn National Eye Hospital in Kuala Lumpur. They were here to obtain a wider perspective in ophthalmic nursing practices as part of their career development.

During their attachment, they learned among other things post-operation management and care of patients, nursing care plan, pre-assessment and counselling of patients, ophthalmic procedures and practices, and infection control programmes. They were also briefed on the requirements and preparation for Joint Commission International (JCI) accreditation – which is an international accreditation of quality and safety of healthcare institutions. The SNEC was accredited in 2009.



*“We observed that the SNEC nurses are excellent in their communication and interaction with patients. We are also pleasantly surprised with how forthcoming the nurses were with sharing their experience of the preparation for JCI accreditation,”*

*Ms Marhamah and Ms Abu Bakar*

*“We can take pride that hospitals in the region are turning to the SNEC for training and benchmarking for achieving international standards. At the same time, it gives us an opportunity to network with them and to share best practices,”* said Ms Low Siew Ngim, Director of Nursing in SNEC.

Nurses who have visited and learned from the SNEC include those from Brunei, Thailand and China. Other training programmes include the SNEC Basic Ophthalmic Nursing and Technician Course which has been organised since 1997.



## How often should you have your eyes checked?

# Have your eyes checked regularly

Regular eye tests are important so that any problems can be treated early.

Eyesight is one of your most important senses. And you want to retain your eyesight into your ripe old age so that you can enjoy your life to the fullest.

It is important to have your eyes checked regularly because you may not be aware that there is something wrong as there may be no symptoms.

For example, high pressure in the eyes which can lead to glaucoma is often undetected until an eye examination. Regular eye examinations are important for early detection and treatment of any eye problem, especially irreversible and blinding conditions like glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy.

For some people, they may notice changes in their vision, in which case, they should get their eyes checked to find out the cause.

An eye test will show if you need to wear spectacles for the first time or if you are already using them, to find out if you need to change your current ones because of changes in your vision. Or worse, it may be an early sign of something more serious which needs to be treated early to prevent any permanent loss in vision.

Young or old, it is advisable that you see an optometrist or ophthalmologist regularly to make sure that all is well with your eyes.

### Those aged three and below

Get the doctor to check your child's eyes during regular appointments with your paediatrician or family doctor. Some common eye conditions to look out for are squint and lazy eye.

### Older children and teenagers

School children will have their eyes checked every year by the School Health Service of the Health Promotion Board. If not, have your child's eyes checked every two years.

### Young adults (age 20 to 39)

Have a comprehensive eye examination if you have a family history of eye disease or if you are suffering from an eye injury.

### Older adults (age 40 to 64)

As you age, you are more likely to develop age-related eye conditions. To monitor changes in your vision, go for a base-line eye disease screening when you are 40 years old. From the results of the screening, the doctor will advise you accordingly on the frequency for follow-up examination.

### For those at risk

If you have a family history of eye disease or have medical conditions like diabetes and high blood pressure, or you are on certain prescription medication which may affect the eyes, you should have your eyes checked by an ophthalmologist more frequently. Check with your doctor for the intervals between check-ups.

### What happens during an eye examination?

Eye examinations are not painful. Your eye doctor will usually conduct a basic eye examination that will consist of an external check of your eyes, the eyelids and the surrounding areas. He will also look at parts of the eye such as the conjunctiva, sclera, cornea and iris, for any signs of disease.

A complete eye examination includes:

- Testing your vision (with or without correct eyewear)
- Testing your peripheral vision
- Assessing the reflexes of your pupils
- Checking the function of your eye muscles
- Testing the pressure in the eyes
- Examination of the front and back of the eye



# A day in my life

## Principal Pharmacist

*Ms Tang Jia Yng*

As a pure science student, Ms Tang Jia Yng had in mind two choices of courses at the university - medicine or pharmacy.

She eventually decided to take up pharmacy. Ms Tang says: "I realised that I may not be able to take the sight of blood, broken bones from trauma cases and death. Therefore, I chose pharmacy."

And, she has been working as a pharmacist in the Singapore National Eye Centre for 11 years now.

Describing a typical day at work, Ms Tang says: "I dispense medications to patients, counsel them on the functionality and possible side effects of using the eye drops, and what to do if they experience allergy after using the eye drops. This will ensure that patients can use the medication safely and effectively."

She also works closely with the medical and nursing staff, advising them on the selection, interactions and side effects of medications.

"Patients may have medications for other illnesses. These drugs may interact or may be incompatible with their eye medications. At times, the patients don't know the names of the current medications they are taking, so we'll have to find ways and means to track down such information for the safety of our patients," says Ms Tang.

Apart from these, she manages the inventories, oversees the initiation programme for new staff, and overall, ensures the smooth running of the pharmacy.

One of the challenges in her job is attending to complaints from patients. And she handles this by "lending them a listening ear and trying to resolve any problems as much as I can."

For Ms Tang, the greatest satisfaction comes from building good rapport with patients and seeing their eyesight improving, or for those with chronic eye diseases, that their condition does not deteriorate - knowing she had a role in it.

# Calendar of Events

## For Ophthalmologists

See <http://www.snecmeetings.org> for more details

### CORNEAL SURGERY AND EXTERNAL EYE DISEASE

Wet Lab & Live Surgery

Audience : General Ophthalmologists  
Date : Saturday - Monday, 19 - 21 May 2012  
Venue : Auditorium and Training Room, Level 4, Tower Block, SNEC

*SNEC is a leading centre for corneal transplantation development in the Asia-Pacific. Prof Donald Tan has been designated as the official Moria ALTK and DSAEK trainer in the Asia-Pacific region, and Prof Tan and a team of course instructors will present a detailed programme comprising didactic lectures, hands-on wet lab, live surgery and clinical case presentations to provide corneal surgeons and ophthalmologists looking after corneal patients with advice on the management of such patients. A detailed set of course notes will be issued to each participant. The emphasis of this programme is on lamellar surgery, but will also cover topics such as the management of pterygium, dry eye, and infectious keratitis cases.*

## For Nursing and Allied Health Professionals

See <http://www.snecmeetings.org> for more details

### UPDATES ON REFRACTIVE SURGERY FOR OPTICIANS AND OPTOMETRISTS

Joint Continuing Professional Education Programme of SOP and SNEC

Audience : Opticians and Optometrists  
Date : Saturday, 28 April 2012  
Venue : Auditorium, Level 4, Tower Block, SNEC

*This course for opticians gives an update on the latest techniques and developments in refractive surgery. Femtosecond LASIK, wavefront-optimised LASIK, ReLEx, advanced surface ablation and phakic intraocular lens implantation will be discussed. Interesting and practical tips for the optician practice will also be discussed at this course such as post LASIK refraction techniques and types of sunshades.*

## SNEC Eye-ducation series of Public Talks

See <http://www.snec.com.sg> for more details

*Singapore National Eye Centre organises various community outreach and engagement programmes with the aim of educating and creating awareness of blinding eye diseases through eye screening, talks and exhibitions.*



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