

## Newsletter

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## Singapore's New Healthcare Regional Cluster

As part of a nationwide initiative to reorganize public healthcare services into three regional clusters, a new regional cluster in the central and northern parts of Singapore has just been officially set up. Each regional cluster will have at least two acute hospitals, a medical school, several polyclinics, specialist centres and community hospitals.

This new regional cluster brings together Tan Tock Seng Hospital ("**TTSH**") and Khoo Teck Puat Hospital ("**KTPH**"). Professor Philip Choo, head of the new regional cluster, remarked that this would make a good partnership as TTSH and KTPH target different demographic segments. Most of TTSH's patients are older and the aim is to prevent existing health problems from recurring. On the other hand, most of KTPH's patients are younger, so it has focused on offering health screening and other preventive care options. This partnership will thus be able to offer the full spectrum of care to the 2 million residents within the regional cluster.

The regional cluster will also encourage healthcare services and professionals to take a more holistic approach. Professor Choo noted that with the regional clusters, it will be in the interest of public healthcare services to proactively care for the community around them, through preventive and rehabilitative care, instead of only looking after patients who walk through their doors.

For more details on the new regional cluster, read the full article [here](#).

## MOH Establishes National Adult Immunisation Schedule

The Singapore Ministry of Health ("**MOH**") has recently established the National Adult Immunisation Schedule ("**NAIS**"), to inform and encourage individuals to receive important vaccinations to reduce the risk of vaccine-preventable diseases. In particular, the NAIS targets adults who have not been previously vaccinated under the National Childhood Immunisation Programme, or who are at risk of vaccine-preventable diseases.

As Senior Minister of State for Health Dr Lam Pin Min noted, there is low awareness of the benefits of adult vaccination against infectious diseases. In this regard, NAIS will disseminate relevant information on the 7 vaccines to target 11 different diseases, targeted at-risk groups who should be vaccinated, and frequency of vaccination.

To further encourage adults to receive vaccinations, Singaporeans will be able to use Medisave to offset up to S\$400 of the cost of the vaccinations from 1 November 2017. However, this will only apply to recommended vaccinations for the target adult population groups in the NAIS, and at Medisave-accredited healthcare institutions.

For more details on the NAIS, you may read MOH's press release [here](#).



## CASE Conducts Ad-hoc Testing of Toothpaste Samples

Earlier this month, the Consumers Association of Singapore ("**CASE**") tested 20 different toothpaste samples in Singapore, to determine if they are safe for consumer use.

The samples were tested for 2 substances, diethylene glycol and fluoride, which are prohibited or must not exceed the quantities stated in the ASEAN Cosmetic Directive ("**ACD**"). The ACD provides that diethylene glycol is prohibited as an ingredient in toothpaste, while fluoride levels cannot exceed 0.15%. Significant exposure to diethylene glycol may lead to renal disorders, while excessive exposure to fluoride may lead to tooth discolouration and bone fractures.

The test results indicated that, for all 20 samples, there was no diethylene glycol found, and the amount of fluoride was within the permissible level of 0.15%. Nonetheless, CASE advised consumers to purchase toothpastes from reliable and reputable sources, to use products according to the stated instructions, and to cease use if there are any adverse effects.

For more details on the methodology and full results, you may read CASE's press release [here](#).

## S\$1.2m Study on Asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

A three-year local study on asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease ("**COPD**") by a team of clinicians and researchers from the SingHealth Duke-NUS Academic Medical Centre commenced on 16 October 2017.

Asthma and COPD are prevalent in Singapore. COPD is a serious respiratory disease that limits airflow to the lungs, and was the 10th leading cause of death and hospital admissions in Singapore last year. Singapore also has one of the highest asthma prevalence in the world, and a startling high mortality rate.

For the purposes of this study, data from 13,000 respiratory patients from Singapore will be collected every year. The data collected will then be used by researchers to create an electronic dashboard for better patient management, by tracking the risk of readmission and treatment plans. These dashboards will be available for healthcare institutions like the Singapore General Hospital and SingHealth Polyclinics to use, and will enable healthcare professionals to identify high-risk patients, predict outcomes and risks, and provide bespoke treatment. The electronic dashboard will also function as a database for research into respiratory diseases.

For more details on the study, you may read the full article [here](#).

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