

News release

Singapore Cancer Society collaborates with 3 hospitals to pilot first SCS Prostate Cancer Specialist Nursing Programme in Singapore

Singapore, 25 January 2018: - Singapore Cancer Society (SCS) is in partnership with Singapore General Hospital, Tan Tock Seng Hospital and National University Hospital, for the SCS Prostate Cancer Specialist Nursing Programme. This programme seeks to train Prostate Cancer Specialist Nurses (PCSN) to provide Prostate Cancer (PCa) patients the full continuum of care in their respective healthcare settings.

SCS fully funds this programme which is modelled after the Prostate Cancer Specialist Nursing Service piloted by The Movember Foundation and Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia in 2012.

Dr Lincoln Tan, Chairman of SCS Prostate Cancer Survivorship Programmes and Consultant, Department of Urology, National University Hospital shares, *“the nurses play an important role in helping the patients navigate our healthcare system, and cope well with their cancer diagnosis and treatment.”*

The purpose of the programme is to ensure the development of a “holistic model of care” for PCa patients by providing them with the appropriate resources to ensure and enhance timely delivery of optimum care and address their psychosocial needs through community outreach, education, SCS Support Groups and intervention.

Mr Albert Ching, Chief Executive Officer, Singapore Cancer Society said, *“Singapore Cancer Society collaborates with local hospitals to establish the SCS Prostate Cancer Specialist Nursing programme to enhance support and care for patients throughout their cancer journey.” “The programme is to ensure that Prostate Cancer patients in healthcare settings are provided with appropriate resources to ensure timely delivery of care, enhance the delivery of optimum care and address their psychological needs through community outreach to improve their quality of life,”* he added.

To-date, 4 SCS Prostate Cancer Specialist Nurses have been trained, and equipped with specialist knowledge and skills pertaining to prostate cancer that improves patient support and personalised care.

Patients are taught self-care, and can contact their SCS Prostate Cancer Specialist Nurse 24/7 for information and guidance in their cancer journey. Easier access to PCSNs have helped patient’s cope with minor issues that may have previously led to unnecessary clinic or emergency department visits. More serious cases are also surfaced and escalated earlier when they occur.

This collaboration also facilitates prostate cancer patients’ transition from an institutional care to a community based care. The SCS Prostate Cancer Specialist Nurse also refers prostate cancer patients for immersion into SCS services, programmes (welfare aid, psychosocial support), The Man Plan Exercise Programme (a resistance exercise programme designed specifically for

prostate cancer patients) and SCS Walnut Warriors cancer support group. PCa patients in the participating hospitals are now better informed of treatment and rehabilitation options, and SCS services since the inception of the Prostate Cancer Specialist Nurse Program.

3-year timeline with the hospitals:

Hospital	SGH	TTSH	NUH
Start Date	1 Sep 2015	1 Jan 2016	1 Dec 2015
End Date	31 Aug 2018	31 Dec 2018	30 Nov 2018

Number of PCa patient related contacts by PCa Specialist Nurses from commencement of programme:

	SGH	TTSH	NUH
2017	719	566	719
2016	674	597	453

Mr Lim Kok Kuan, a Prostate Cancer survivor and SCS Walnut Warrior, shared his experience of how he has benefited from SGH's PCSN's help in understanding his treatment and getting referral to relevant help. *"It was also through her (the PCSN) that I became a member of Singapore Cancer Society's support group, Walnut Warriors. It was the best thing that happened to me. After joining the group for a resistance exercise, I was introduced to everybody. And everybody has been so friendly. They make you feel so much at home because we are all the same kind – one of a kind – so we are all in the same group. We can relate to each other so easily; we can open up to them; so they are also a form of support and this is very important to us, people with our condition, with this support."*

The benefits of the programme extend beyond improving patients outcomes and satisfaction. By helping doctors with patient counselling and education, pre-operative preparation and post-operative follow-ups, which used to be done primarily by doctors, PCSNs not only improved patient understanding, but also frees up doctors time to see more patients. For the PCSNs, the increase in their professional knowledge and expansion of their roles, has led to improved career satisfaction.

Norlela binte Hashim, an Assistant Nurse Clinician at Singapore General Hospital who is also a Prostate Cancer Specialist Nurse, explains her role. She said, *"Prostate Cancer patients require different treatment options at different stages. Patients may suffer from side effects after surgery, radiotherapy treatment or hormonal therapy. As an ongoing point of contact and support to the patients I am able to advise them on how to overcome and cope with these side-effects of treatment. With such a structured programme I am able to better coordinate the patients' care."*

Funds generated through the annual Movember Campaign are utilised to sponsor the training of the Specialist Nurses and to fund the programme. \$80,000 is distributed to each hospital to run the programme annually, for three years.

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About Singapore Cancer Society (www.singaporecancersociety.org.sg)

Established in 1964, Singapore Cancer Society is a self-funded voluntary welfare organisation which provides patient care services to needy cancer patients through its welfare, hospice home care, cancer treatment subsidy and rehabilitation support programmes. In addition, the Society also provides free cancer screening services and promotes cancer awareness and prevention through its public education and community outreach programmes.

Annex A

The SCS Prostate Cancer Specialist Nursing Programme is part of the SCS Prostate Cancer Survivorship Programme. Besides funding the programme at the hospitals, SCS supports by providing training, exchange opportunities and educational materials.

1. EDUCATION SERIES

SCS partners private and public healthcare institutions to further educate on prostate cancer survivors and caregivers on prostate cancer. Such educational interventions may assist the prostate cancer survivors with the adjustment to their survivorship. Public forums and corporate talks on Prostate Cancer are also organised mainly during SCS Prostate Cancer Awareness Month not only to educate survivors but also to create a societal understanding and acceptance of the growing population of prostate cancer survivors and the issues they face. Educational resources and collaterals are also produced.

- In 2017, 2000 copies of the SCS Walnut Warriors support group leaflets were reprinted.
- In 2017, 1000 copies each of these SCS PCa booklets were reprinted: *All About Your Diet, Your Emotional Well-Being* and *A Medical Guidebook*.
- In 2018, a Chinese version of these PCa booklets will be released.
- A PCa Survivorship video in English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil has been produced. It is distributed in the form of a flashdrive to all newly diagnosed PCa patients by PCSNs at their respective hospitals.

2. NURSE EXCHANGE PROGRAMME (OUTBOUND) / TRAINING & WORKSHOP

The purpose of the nurse exchange programme is to upgrade the skills of the Singapore Prostate Cancer Nurses, in best practice methods of nursing navigation and assistance; share expertise, ideas on best practice with health professionals, nurses and personnel in the areas of care towards PCa patients / survivors; to provide avenue to observe programmes and services provided to PCa Patients/ survivors in community settings. Local PCa Specialist Nurses (two per calendar year) are sent to for overseas internship and attend PCa conferences overseas. This will provide them with the unique opportunity to see how other PCSNs work in a similar but different work environment from back home.

In August 2017, two PCSNs attended the 18th Asia Pacific Prostate Cancer Conference in Melbourne, Australia. As part of their learning experience, they were part of an attachment to Australia Prostate Cancer Research Centre, Austin Hospital and the Movember Head Office.

3. SCS WALNUT WARRIORS

Support groups are the one of the best ways to actively engage and connect with the cancer patients and/or cancer survivors. SCS Walnut Warriors reaches out to men who have been diagnosed with prostate cancer, providing psychosocial support and encouragement to its members. It helps them make the transition in life by enhancing their well-being through therapeutic and enrichment programmes. Members meet to share their personal experiences,

exchange information, and gain an insight into how others cope with their condition and the problems they encountered. Members also engage in a variety of activities such as educational talks or workshops, social and recreational events, enrichment and interest learning sessions, as well as peer-to-peer support. A PCa Specialist Nurses refers PCa newly diagnosed patients to SCS Walnut Warriors Support Group. SCS conducts workshops for SCS Walnut Warriors and actively promote The Man Plan Exercise Programme.

4. SCS PROSTATE CANCER SURVIVORSHIP PROGRAMME ADVISORY PANEL

This Advisory Panel consists of key stakeholders from the participating institutions/ organisations. This panel meets to discuss matters concerning the planning, running and development of these programmes, as well as the development of PCa materials. Each professional also takes turn to host a talk / dialogue session with the SCS Walnut Warriors during their monthly meetings.

5. OUTCOME MEASURES & EVALUATION

SCS engaged an external consultant to validate the programme. The results include:

1. Quality Of Life Survey
 - Patients surveyed indicated an improvement in the number and severity of supportive care needs across the treatment period.
 - Patients surveyed indicated an improvement in degree of distress, anxiety and depression.
 - Patients surveyed indicated no significant changes in health-related quality of life, with marginal differences across time.
2. SCS Walnut Warriors and Man Plan Exercise
 - All interviewees agreed that SCS Walnut Warriors Support Group has been effective in providing its members with social support and information of treatment options.
 - The Man Plan is an effective exercise programme to help PCa patients combat the symptoms/side-effects of PCa and its treatment.
3. Prostate Cancer Specialist Nursing Programme
 - The PCSN has been effective in achieving its goal of supporting patients. Benefits have also accrued to doctors, nurses and hospitals through saving time, improving professional satisfaction, and improving patient satisfaction and outcomes.
