

Family Physicians at the frontline of Chronic Disease Management

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In last year's edition of this update in Chronic Disease Management, we had the privilege of 6 esteemed family physicians and specialists share their knowledge on topics ranging from hypertension and proteinuria in patients with or without diabetes mellitus, initiation of insulin therapy in the primary care setting, weight management, Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD), gout and heart failure.

This year will be re-run of the topics as part of the enhanced Graduate Diploma in Family Medicine program. A major difference this year had been the unexpected arrival of Covid-19 on our shores. The global pandemic has required us to adapt the means to deliver this course content. The College is committed to continuing our Continuing Medical Education programs through innovative tele-conferencing platforms such as Zoom.

In Unit 1, A/Prof Goh Lee Gan will discuss about the management of hypertension and proteinuria in patients with and without Diabetes Mellitus. This article will discuss on the blood pressure targets in older patients, changes in albuminuria and cardiovascular risk under antihypertensive treatment and a review of antihypertensives for treating hypertension in patients with Diabetes Mellitus.

In Unit 2, Dr. Tan Hwee Huan will discuss about the challenges of initiation of insulin therapy in primary care setting. This article will discuss on the common barriers in insulin initiation and what are the proposed strategies for these barriers.

In Unit 3, Dr. Benjamin Lam Chih Chiang will discuss about biology of weight regulation and how obesity as a disease signify an abnormal physiology and its associated health consequences. Also, a brief update on Intermittent Fasting will be discussed and how it can potentially be a treatment option for obesity.

In Unit 4, Drs. Richard Lee and Anita Lim will present a case vignette of a patient with multiple chronic diseases with recurrent gout flares. This article will bring you through a step-wise approach on how to initiate Urate Lowering Therapy (ULT), various types of ULT agents, treatment targets and follow-ups.

In Unit 5, Dr. Desmond Wai will present an overview of Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD): Prevalence, Natural history of NAFLD, diagnostic criteria and management at Primary Care setting.

In Unit 6, Dr. Rohit Khurana presented on the assessment and shared care management of both heart failure with preserved, and heart failure reduced ejection fraction. His article provided the latest updates, recommendations, including novel treatment options in heart failure with reduced ejection fraction.

The selected ten readings by A/Prof Goh Lee Gan included articles on SGLT2 inhibitor on renal function in T2DM patients, effects of DPP4 inhibitors and Sulphonylureas on albuminuria in T2DM patients, exercise prescription for weight management in obese adults at risk for osteoarthritis, evidence for treat-to-target serum urate in gout patients, management of NAFLD, and management of heart failure with preserved ejection fraction.

The rapidly ageing population and increase in chronic diseases is relentless. By 2030, one in four Singaporeans will be aged 65 and above as compared to one in eight today.¹ Also, our senior citizens are living longer but not necessarily healthier lives.² In 2015-2016, one in four Singaporeans aged above 65 years old developed a chronic disease.³ This is according to The Singapore Life Panel, a study conducted by the Centre for Research on the Economics of Ageing³ at the Singapore Management University (SMU). While our healthcare spending remained fairly stable with well-controlled chronic diseases, those with poorly-controlled chronic diseases who developed stroke, end-stage renal failure or other major health shocks will experience persistently high healthcare expenditure. Certain cancers are also increasingly being viewed as chronic diseases, especially with advances in therapeutics and increased survivorship.

In this issue, we will have an original article by Drs. Rose Fok and Kiley Loh on cancer survivorship care. Survivorship care is an increasingly essential component of high-quality cancer care due to rising cancer incidence, survival, and the recognition of challenges that cancer survivors face. The article will help define the key components of high-quality survivorship care, review the current and future landscape of cancer survivorship in Singapore, and the role of primary care in community cancer survivorship.

We hope this re-run of Chronic Disease Management had been a good refresher course for you. Please do stay safe in this fight against Covid-19.

References

1. Ministry of Health, Aging Planning Office. Ageing in place in Singapore Available at: <http://www.gs.org.sg/sg50conference/pdf/s4-1.pdf> [Accessed 24 February 2019]
2. Reddy KS. Global Burden of Disease Study 2015 provides GPS for global health 2030. *The Lancet*. 2016 Oct 8;388(10053):1448-9.
3. Centre for Research on the Economics of Ageing, Singapore Management University (SMU). 1 in 4 seniors develop chronic condition, early findings show. Available from: https://crea.smu.edu.sg/sites/crea.smu.edu.sg/files/news/pdf/ST_20161112_1.pdf [Accessed 24 February 2019]