

Family Medicine in 2023 and Beyond

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SFP2023; 49(2)

In Singapore, primary care is being increasingly recognised as playing an important role in the future of Singapore's healthcare. A strong primary healthcare translates to a cost-effective healthcare system, better health equity, and a healthier population.^{1,2}

Singapore's primary care ecosystem will be undergoing a major reform in the near future with the aim of being an important pillar of Singapore's healthcare system as Singapore adopts the Healthier SG strategy. This transformed primary care ecosystem seeks to address the challenges of Singapore's ageing population and improve population health outcomes. From the third quarter of 2023, Singapore residents will be invited to enrol with a GP or polyclinic doctor of their choice as their first line of care. These family doctors will support the healthcare needs of these residents throughout their life ("One Family Physician and One Health Plan for Everyone").^{3,4}

The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us that vaccinations are paramount for preventive care and uneventful recovery from disease. For a sustainable healthcare ecosystem, Singapore must practise healthcare, not sickness care, and this is what Healthier SG aims to do as it focuses on preventive care. One of the key features of Healthier SG is for family doctors and residents to develop health plans together. These health plans include lifestyle adjustments, regular health screenings, and recommended vaccinations, which are subsidised.³

In Unit 1, Dr Lionel Lum and Prof Paul Tambyah provide an update on emerging infectious diseases and the need for frontline physicians to stay vigilant as borders open. They also highlight the importance of the role that frontline physicians can play in preventive measures such as pre-travel advice, ensuring vaccinations are up to date, and advocating antimicrobial stewardship.

In Unit 2, Drs Wong Sin Yew and Lam Mun San write about the importance of adult vaccinations and the role that Healthier SG can play in improving vaccination rates. They emphasise the need to understand the patterns of vaccine preventable infections in the adult population, their needs, barriers to immunisation, and access so as to further develop ways to scale up adult vaccination programmes.

In Unit 3, Dr Cheong Siew Meng shares key practice management challenges that primary care providers may encounter as Singapore embarks on Healthier SG and provides some recommendations that primary care providers can consider. He has grouped these challenges and recommendations into four key focus areas: 1) our people; 2) our processes; 3) our systems; and 4) our networks.

In this issue, A/Prof Goh Lee Gan has selected ten current readings on topics related to vaccinations.

This issue also features a PRISM article by Dr Kuang Silin. This article discusses a case study on the management of plagiocephaly in infants in primary care.

REFERENCES

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