

Singapore strengthens preventive efforts for better cardiovascular health

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The Health Ministry hopes to utilise technology to improve the rehabilitation process



Singapore Prevention and Cardiac Rehabilitation Symposium 2019 was conducted recently at Singapore to address the increase in burden of cardiovascular diseases, to strengthen focus on preventive efforts for better cardiovascular health, importance of cardiac rehabilitation, and leveraging technology to improve cardiac rehabilitation and redesigning model of care.

Edwin Tong, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Law and Ministry of Health said, "To encourage Singaporeans to better take care of their lifestyle, the Ministry of Health (MOH), working with the Health Promotion Board (HPB), has been investing in preventive health by making it easier and more accessible to live healthily. HPB came up with the National Steps Challenge. It had its fourth instalment at the end of last year and we are looking at how we can do this better. Specific to cardiac health, a ban on partially hydrogenated oils, a main source of artificial trans fat will be introduced in 2021. Major supermarkets and manufacturers have pledged to meet the ban one year earlier, by June 2020. Also, to reduce smoking prevalence, we will progressively raise the minimum legal age for smoking from 18 to 21 years old in 2021, and standardise all tobacco products' packaging from July 2020."

Aligned with this year's theme of the symposium, "Contemporary Cardiac Rehabilitation", the Health Ministry hopes to utilise technology to improve the rehabilitation process and for outcomes for cardiac patients to be more consistent, sustainable and to ensure timely care and better health outcomes.

The Minister also added that home health monitoring is particularly important because it allows the patients to get back quickly to the environment they are comfortable in, the community they are happy to be around and to get back into some semblance of normality in their life, but at the same time, ensuring that the monitoring and degree of care are not compromised. This kind of measure could also potentially reduce healthcare providers' workload at the hospital setting or at community hospitals, and to healthcare cost to patients in the longer term.