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Singapore's SingHealth Polyclinics launches the Primary Care Research Institute

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First local research and innovation platform enabling Primary Care Professionals from public and private healthcare to deliver stronger primary care and improve patients' health outcomes



Singapore's SingHealth Polyclinics (SHP) launched the Primary Care Research Institute (PCRI) on 29 August, where multidisciplinary primary care professionals (PCPs) can conduct impactful research in partnership with patients and the public to improve health outcomes. It also created Healthier SG enablers so clinicians in the public and private healthcare sectors could provide better primary care. Dr Janil Puthucheary, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Communications and Information, graced the launch.

A multidisciplinary research and innovation platform for PCPs, PCRI is the academic arm of SHP. The platform is designed to identify areas where doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and other health professionals can work together to enhance health literacy and self-efficacy to maximize patients' overall well-being.

The Primary Care Research Institute (PCRI) enables Primary Care Professionals (PCPs) to conduct impactful research and effective patient care

The **PCRI's key focus** in preventive health aligns with the Healthier SG strategy. By supporting the key enablers of healthcare IT and data infrastructure, training and development as well as financing policies, the PCRI aims to enhance the capabilities of both public and private PCPs, equipping them with the latest knowledge and skills in both medical and non-medical competencies, such as health economics and implementation sciences.

PCRI involves active participation from the public and patients, ensuring that their perspectives and voices are respected, valued, and integrated into the research process. The PCRI has formed an expert group of patients and caregivers who have undergone structured training conducted by SHP, and are consulted on a regular basis to gather direct feedback on research projects and studies to be conducted. The PCRI will enhance PCPs' skills in research methodology, implementation science and health economics to enable them to understand, adapt and adopt best primary care practices and continue delivering evidence-based and cost-efficient care to their patients.

PCRI project is a study on new ways to conduct ambulatory blood pressure monitoring (ABPM). Blood pressure can be evaluated objectively and continuously by ABPM, which helps patients better understand their hypertension control and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Enabling industry partnerships

As a facilitator of public-private partnerships, the PCRI creates a collaborative ecosystem, where stakeholders, such as general practitioners and industry partners can come together to support the Healthier SG initiative. SHP's MOU with GP+ Co-operative and AstraZeneca signifies the tripartite partnership for knowledge exchange and sharing updates on emerging technologies and evidence- based clinical practices for PCPs. In addition, they will identify care models that enhance health outcomes and patient experiences, while adapting existing care models to be localised and implemented by Primary Care Networks (PCNs).

"The PCRI will garner evidence on effective ways to raise the self-efficacy in people to take control of their health, with guidance from their family doctors and primary care professionals. The research training programmes will upskill these primary care professionals, involve people and public in research to ensure that studies are scientifically robust, inclusive, focus on real life needs, and have a palpable impact on people and their families that we serve in the community. It is a research institute for the people, by the people," said Clinical Associate Professor (Dr) Tan Ngiap Chuan, Director of Research, SHP and Vice-chair, Research, SingHealth-Duke NUS Family Medicine Academic Clinical Programme (FM ACP).

"The launch of the PCRI is a step forward for the Singapore healthcare ecosystem, and we are honoured to be partnering with SingHealth Polyclinics and GP+ Co-operative to improve patients' lives and support the Healthier SG initiative. Through this partnership, we will continue to unlock innovation with our partners and to transform the delivery of care across chronic diseases including asthma and cancer. The partnership will also leverage our A.Catalyst Network to enable access to a wealth of technology solutions and expertise to PCRI research, to jointly develop solutions to alleviate patient and caregiver pain points and deliver enhanced health outcomes and patient experiences Kim Suyeon, Country President, AstraZeneca Singapore.

Onsite Coverage By Hithaishi Bhaskar