



## The President speaks...

Associate Professor  
Goh Lee Gan

### AGEING WELL AND MORE...

Being able to age successfully is a desired goal of older adults across the world. Older Singaporeans aspire to that too. Much has been written about successful ageing and how to achieve it. What we need is a pragmatic model that we can use in our daily life. Arising out of the work of the Inter-ministerial Committee on Ageing in Singapore and their Committee on Ageing Report – 4 components can be identified at the personal level of action for the older Singapore adult and his or her significant others: financial independence, ageing in place, healthy ageing, and active ageing.

We have therefore decided to anchor our GSS health literacy programme for Singaporeans young and old on these 4 components for this year. The first GSS activity to kick off with the 4 component model in mind this year is the seminar on Ageing Well held on 13 April 2013. Thanks are due to the 3 speakers: Dr Chiang Hai Ding, Dr Lee Chong Kau, and Dr Kanwaljit Soin.

In the next bulletin we will highlight the work at TARA@Jurong Point – Social interventions to create capability on Healthy Ageing and Active Ageing. We will give readers more information on our forthcoming Conference on Ageing 2014 where we will spotlight the four components of successful ageing together. Watch out for it on the GSS Website.



The President and Council  
Members of Gerontological  
Society of Singapore  
wishes everyone...

# HAPPY NATIONAL DAY



Public Seminar "Ageing Well", 13 April 2013, York Hotel

# Ageing Well Mentally

Dr. Lee Chong Kau, Honorary Director, Institute of Elders



## What is ageing well mentally?

It is good to be healthy, wealthy and being surrounded with loved ones in our later years. But not many of us will have all the desired situations as we grow older. The good news is it is possible for all of us to age well mentally in most given situations, provided that we can make good adjustments to changes, and to make the best out of whatever situations we are in. We may say that to age well means:

- (a) to have a positive self-esteem;
- (b) to make good adjustments with the changes and losses in life;
- (c) to live a meaningful and purposeful life;
- (d) to make good use of our physical, mental, social and material resources;

**"You too can age well mentally and graciously even though physical deteriorations and limitations may be inevitable."**

- (e) to relate well to the people around us and to the environment;
- (f) to have inner peace always.

## Some suggestions for ageing well mentally:

- (a) Take part in a regular group such as a choral group, a reminiscence and autobiography group, or a physical exercise group;
- (b) Join a class to learn a new language, painting, computer, dancing and etc;
- (c) Read some good books, welcome music and the arts to enrich your life;
- (d) Develop hobbies such as gardening, stamp collection, bird watching and etc;
- (e) Engage in some research or writing such as family history/genealogy, street names, psychological profiles of national and international leaders;
- (f) Volunteer yourself in community services;
- (g) Talk to someone for life directions or on life dreams
- (h) Love yourself – eat well, rest well, play well, exercise well and find a centre for life;
- (i) Love others - be kind and hospitable to all others;
- (j) Find an anchor for your life – so that you are better prepared for stormy times.

## They have aged well mentally

Many of my older friends are well mentally even though their physical conditions have deteriorated as they grow older. Mr. Yeow C. H., conductor of the Joyful Singers of the Institute of Elders, is still going strong in his choral conducting at the age of 81. He had a stroke in 2006 and had a major knee surgery in 2009.

Mdm. Luo C. C., an 80 year old grandma, is a student of the Institute of Elders computer class. She has excelled in her computer skills. She has numbness in her finger tips on both hands, and therefore unable to feel the little protruding mark on the F and J keys on the keyboard. Yet she was so determined to overcome her physical limitation that she has used glue to enlarge the protruding marks on the key board. She can now use the internet to communicate with her children, grandchildren and many others.



# Ageing Well Physically

Dr Chiang Hai Ding, GS Council Member

## Tips on Ageing Well Physically:

- 1) To Exercise – To build up fitness of heart – eg cycling, walking, bicycling, aerobics;
- 2) Resistance exercise – Weight Lifting, Working out in Gym, Stretching exercise;
- 3) Maintain balance diet – moderate intake of sugar and salt;
- 4) Sufficient water and salt;
- 5) Go for periodic medical check up;
- 6) Be active and engaged in activities – Don't isolate yourself.



# Ageing Well Socially

Dr Kanwaljit Soin from Women's Initiative for Ageing Successfully (WINGS)



## Tips on Ageing Well Socially:

- 1) Maintain relationships with family and friends;
- 2) Help others – Improve mental and physical health – social and productive engagement;
- 3) Spending enjoyable time with family and friends;
- 4) Build social network and reduce social isolation.

## Memorable quotes from the our speakers...

*“Build and Maintain social relationships and networks. Help one another. Women are key resource -- empower them.”* Dr Kanwaljit Soin on Ageing Well Socially

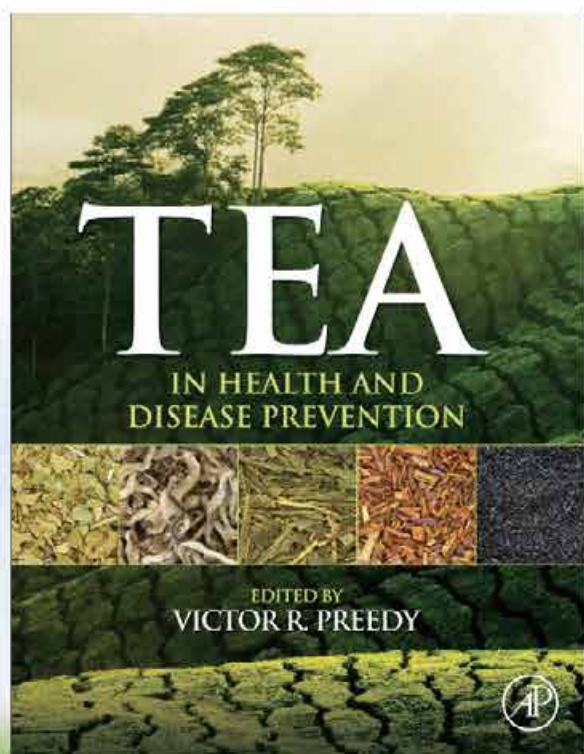
*“Regular exercise, balanced diet and medical checks are important.”* Dr Chiang Hai Ding on Ageing Well Physically

*“Maintain positive self image and esteem. Live a meaningful and purposeful life. Accept and adjust to losses associated with ageing.”* Dr Lee Chong Kau on Ageing Well Mentally



# Tea in Health and Disease Prevention

The NUS research team has published a chapter on tea and cognitive health in the new book "Tea in Health and Disease Prevention" by Dr. Feng Lei, NUHS



## Summary Points of the book chapter:

- Catechins and other compounds, for example L- theanine, in tea have neuroprotective effects.
- Neuroprotective effects of tea compounds are due to multiple mechanisms.
- The main mechanisms include the antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties of tea extracts and their effects on the modification of Alzheimer's disease and its pathology.
- Many other mechanisms could be involved in the neuroprotective effects of tea.
- Population based studies suggest that tea consumption is associated with a lower risk of cognitive impairment and cognitive decline.
- There is a linear relationship between tea consumption and cognitive performance.
- The cognitive benefits of tea consumption are not limited to the particular type of tea.
- Drinking tea could be a simple way to prevent cognitive decline, but more research is needed.

*Reference: Feng L, Ng TP, Kua EH, Preedy VR. Tea and cognitive function of elderly people - evidence from neurobiology and epidemiology. In: Tea in Health and Disease Prevention. First edition. Edited by Preedy VR. London, October 2012: Kings College London. Elsevier Inc. ISBN-9780123849373*

## Rethinking psychogeriatric care in Asia

Professor Kua Ee Heok, NUHS

Abstract of presentation at Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists Annual Scientific Meeting, May 2013

The focus of psychogeriatric care should be in the community. Ideally, a day hospital or centre in the community can be the nucleus of the service with doctors, nurses, psychologists and other mental health therapists working as a team. A combined geriatric medicine and psychiatry unit is more appropriate – this will facilitate referral, reduce cost and allow for integration of the two services. With referrals from the general hospital, the day hospital or centre can provide step-down care programme and this will reduce the burden of bed shortage in many acute hospitals ( Kua, 2010).

The suicide rate of elderly people in Singapore is higher than in young people. Prevention programmes were run by non-governmental organisations like the Gerontological Society and a telephone helpline started by a voluntary group called

the Singapore Action Group of Elders. The Department of Psychological Medicine in the National University of Singapore provided training for retirees who could be peer-counsellors. The connectedness among the mental health service, voluntary organisations and family care-givers has seen the gradual decline in elderly suicide rates in Singapore (Kua, Ko & Ng, 2003). This is an excellent example of how the government can work with professional bodies, non-governmental organisations and religious groups for the betterment of elderly care.

### References

- Kua EH, Ko SM, Ng TP (2003) Recent trends in elderly suicide rates in a multi-ethnic Asian city. International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry. 18;533-536.*  
*Kua EH (2010) Rethinking psychogeriatric service in Asia. International Psychiatry, 7, 34-36.*



# Highlights... Ageing Well Seminar

13 April 2013



Q&A...lively and stimulating



Speakers Dr Kanwaljit Soin (second from left),  
Dr Chiang Hai Ding (middle)



warming up... doing their stuff!





# Notice of 27th AGM of the Gerontological Society of Singapore

24 August 2013, 2.00pm, Venue: TaRA @ Jurong Point Shopping Centre (#06-05, Old Wing)

## Agenda

- The President's Message
- To confirm the Minutes of the 26th AGM
- To receive and approve the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the year ended 30 June 2013
- Election of Honorary Auditor
- Any other Business

Dear Members, your kind attendance is greatly appreciated.

## 7th HENRY LIM LECTURE 2013 – BEYOND TODAY

24 August 2013, 3.00pm

Guest Speaker: Mr Richard Magnus, Chairman, The Office of Public Guardians  
Please register with Shirley @ 63344445 ext 103 or shirley@pcs.org.sg

\$5 for members  
\$10 for non-members

## Highlights... Ageing Well Seminar 13 April 2013



sitting down and working out...

### 27TH GERONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY COUNCIL MEMBERS

President	Prof Goh Lee Gan	Members	Dr Chiang Hai Ding
1st Vice President	(vacant)	Alice Chin, Tay Choo Yian, Jennie Lee	
2nd Vice President	Dr Chow Yeow Leng	Christine Sim, Anita Ho	
Imm. Past President	Prof Kua Ee Heok	Hon. Admin	Shirley Lim
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