

The Editors' Musings

DR TINA TAN

Editor

Dr Tan is a psychiatrist in private practice and an alumnus of Duke-NUS Medical School. She treats mental health conditions in all age groups but has a special interest in caring for the elderly. With a love for the written word, she makes time for reading, writing and self-publishing on top of caring for her patients and loved ones.



Greek mythology tells of two people who were granted eternal life but not eternal youth. One, the Cumaean Sibyl, who grew so old and withered that all that remained of her was her voice. The other, Tithonus, was turned into a cricket by the goddess Eos to relieve him of his unending existence. These legends warn of the fallacy of seeking eternal life while neglecting eternal youth. Likewise, while the topic of longevity should interest everyone (for who would not want to live longer?), living healthier is just as important, if

not more so. I invite you to peruse our articles by Prof Andrea B Maier and Dr Hishamuddin Badaruddin on the topic of health and lifespan, and the role of longevity clinics.

On a related note, by now many of our readers would have heard of the tragic and sudden passing of one near and dear to SMA's heart, A/Prof Cheong Pak Yean. We have included in this issue two touching eulogies celebrating A/Prof Cheong's life and achievements. Rest in peace, A/Prof Cheong.

DR LIM ING HAAN

Guest Editor

Dr Lim is the first female interventional cardiologist in Singapore. She is an early adopter of new technology and is a key opinion leader in international cardiology conferences. She shares a clinic with her twin, Dr Lim Ing Ruen, an ENT surgeon at Mount Elizabeth Hospital. Both believe in the power of food, travel, laughter and loyalty in forming strong family bonding.



In this edition of *SMA News*, we feature two articles centred on healthspan and healthy ageing.

In the field of cardiology, the concept of preventive cardiology has long been the basis of the practice guidelines. This idea is widely applied to preventive medicine which aims to decrease mortality and improve health. The Chronic Disease Management Programme and the Healthier SG initiative are national strategies grounded in preventive medicine, and they focus on providing optimal health-care for our ageing population and on prolonging the healthspan of Singaporeans.

The idea of healthy longevity is gaining traction globally. While researchers have jumped onto the bandwagon of precision geromedicine, focusing on efforts to estimate biological age and direct gero-intervention research, the Ministry of Health (MOH) has also embarked on a multipronged approach to engage the healthy seniors to promote health and active ageing.

Out of curiosity, I visited the website of Agency for Integrated Care. Its homepage displayed a clear message: "Turn your Silver Years into Sparkling Adventures"; it also calls for "Senior Learning and Volunteerism" and appeals for visitors to "contribute to society with C3A". What exactly is C3A? By clicking on the red "LEARN MORE" tab, I was directed to

a page with trending courses on diverse topics like "Enhancing Sleep Quality and Managing Insomnia with TCM", "AI tools to Make Daily Life Easy", "TikTok Guide for Seniors", "Introduction to E Commerce", and many more. C3A, short for Council for Third Age, is an initiative by MOH and the Ministry of Education under the action plan for successful ageing. In collaboration with Singapore University of Social Sciences, it developed the geragogy guidelines on training senior learners. I would like to highlight that geragogy is a theory which recognises that senior learners learn differently. By developing the gerogogy guidelines and making these courses available, MOH has offered senior learners in Singapore resources catered to their specific learning needs, and this is an important enabler for seniors to remain independent longer.

While it is important to emphasise that healthy longevity is centred around lifestyle, social and environmental interventions, cognition is important and must not be neglected.

Cognitive health is the ability to think, learn and remember clearly. Physical and cognitive health go hand in hand. While muscle strength, functional mobility and cardiorespiratory fitness are important, the cognitive domains of verbal and numerical abilities, memory and processing speed are equally so. I think we have a lot to remind our patients on how to age well. Happy reading. ♦