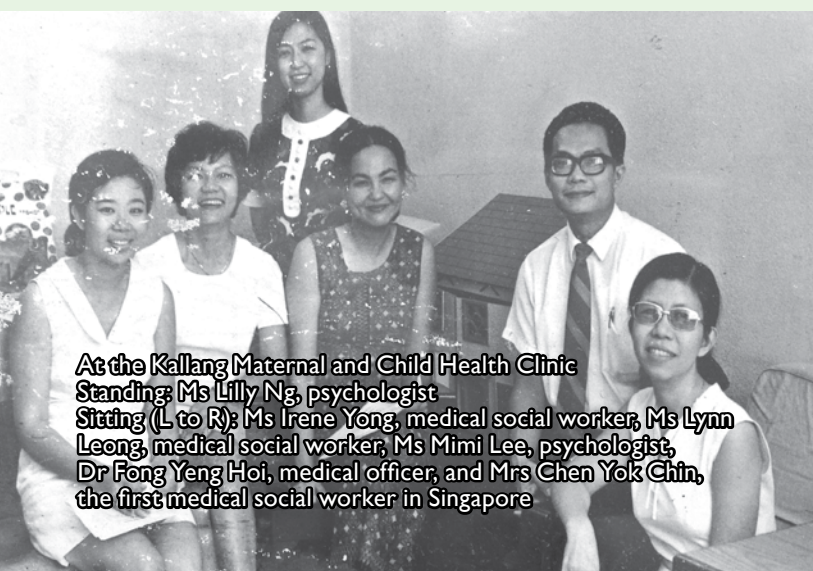


On the Shoulders of Giants

By A/Prof Daniel Fung, Editorial Board Member and Dr Tor Phern Chern



Psychologist Mr David Oon (left) and Dr Wong Sze Tai



At the Kallang Maternal and Child Health Clinic
 Standing: Ms Lilly Ng, psychologist
 Sitting (L to R): Ms Irene Yong, medical social worker, Ms Lynn Leong, medical social worker, Ms Mimi Lee, psychologist, Dr Fong Yeng Hoi, medical officer, and Mrs Chen Yok Chin, the first medical social worker in Singapore

A child in Singapore, as defined by the Children and Young Persons Act, is someone under the age of 14. Worldwide definitions differ, due to a range in various countries' age of consent (which is 21 in Singapore), and is complicated by the period that defines adolescence.

The development of the discipline of Child Psychiatry emerged from research surrounding child development, and that of emotional disturbance and disabilities. Child Psychiatry is a subspecialty of Psychiatry, while Psychiatry itself is a medical specialty. There is public confusion about this as many professionals, including doctors, think that psychiatrists and psychologists are interchangeable terms. The reality is that psychiatrists are medical doctors while psychologists are not, and only clinical psychologists work in clinical settings, like clinics and hospitals. This confusion is made worse in Child Psychiatry, where most of the work does not involve medications (which only the medical doctor can prescribe). In the English-speaking world, most psychiatrists will agree that Child Psychiatry started at the turn of the 19th century and became popularised through the child guidance clinic movement in the 1920s. Its goal was to prevent juvenile delinquency but also realised that it is important to foster educational interventions and protecting children from abuse. The first textbook of Child Psychiatry was published in 1935 by Dr Leo Kanner (who was also credited for describing autism), and the first Chair of Child Psychiatry was established in Missouri, USA, and occupied by Dr E James Anthony.



Sunrise Wing today

History of Child Psychiatry in Singapore

Child Psychiatry in Singapore officially began on 7 April 1970, under Dr Wong Sze Tai, when the Ministry of Health (MOH) opened the Child Guidance Clinic (CGC) at the Outram Road General Hospital (now known as the Singapore General Hospital), in a bungalow originally occupied by the Medical Superintendent. The ground work for establishing CGC was undertaken by Dr Ho Eng Siong, a senior registrar psychiatrist, and Mr Fred Long, a psychologist, under the leadership of Dr Yap Meow Foo, who was the Medical Superintendent of Woodbridge Hospital (WH). CGC initially operated at the equivalent of two days a week. Less than a year after starting the service, a supporting beam broke, and the roof of the clinic collapsed. The building was declared unsafe for occupation and the clinic moved to the Kallang Maternal and Child Health Clinic. It resumed its services on 17 March 1971 with the equivalent of three days a week, after the addition of a medical officer and social worker. CGC stayed in Kallang for two years and has been providing full-time services since 1972.

CGC subsequently moved to a pre-war nurses' hostel (now known as the Annexe building) at Russels Road, near Alexandra Park, and stayed there for the next ten years. Patients were charged \$1 for subsidised referrals and \$35 for named referrals. Despite the multiple logistical and manpower challenges at the time, the mood was described as "exciting, with time for tea between cases", and "one of hope, amidst great struggling".

From the beginning, a team approach was adopted, with all cases seen by a psychiatrist, a psychologist, a social worker, a nurse, an occupational therapist and even a remedial teacher from the Ministry of Education. New cases were discussed by the multidisciplinary team during memorable lunchtime meetings to establish a management plan.

Under Dr Wong Sze Tai's leadership, CGC was renamed the Child Psychiatry Clinic (CPC) in 1972 to reflect that

the clinic provided more services than "mere guidance".

It moved in 1982 to a more conveniently located and expanded facility at the Institute of Health at Outram Road.

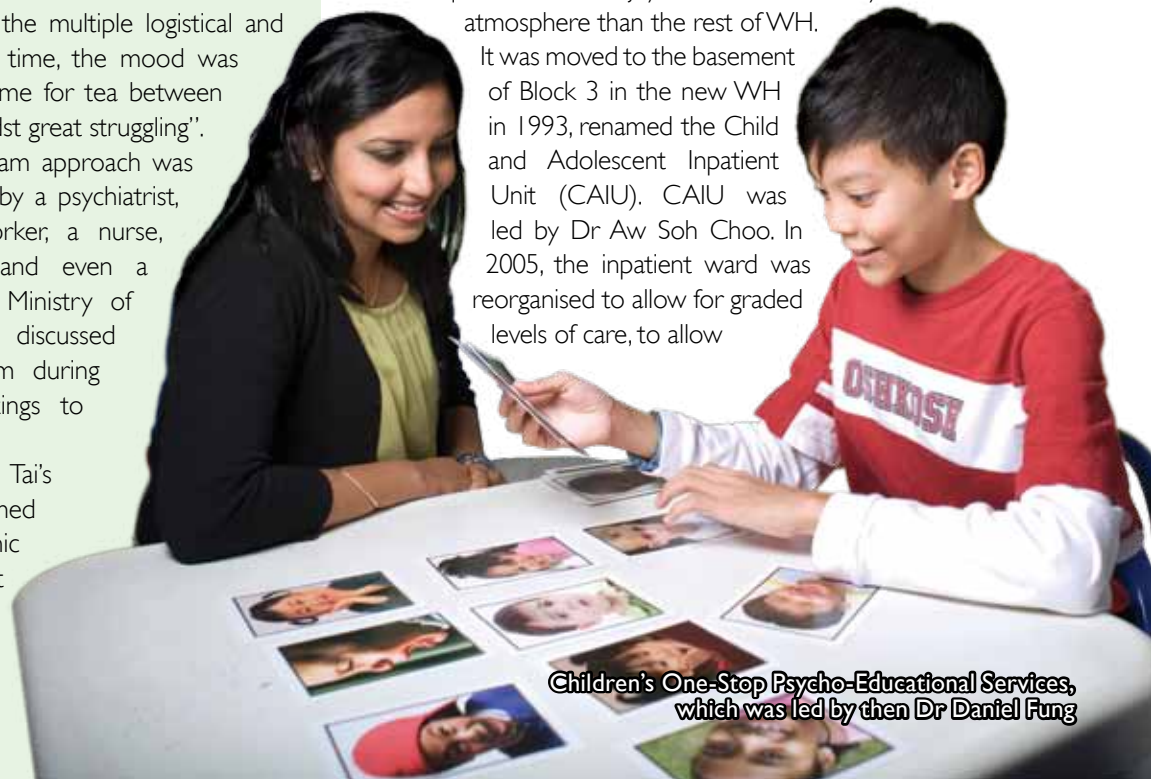
An observation room with a one-way mirror was set up in CPC, which allowed trainees and staff to observe assessments and therapy sessions. The sessions could also be recorded for teaching and evaluation purposes.

In 1993, the clinic reverted to its previous name, the Child Guidance Clinic, which was in line with the establishment of the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. In 1998, it moved to its current location at the Health Promotion Board building in the Outram campus.

In addition, there was a clear need for an inpatient Child Psychiatry service as children and adolescents who required psychiatric admission were sent to the adult wards in WH. This situation was far from ideal due to the custodial nature of WH at that time. There were efforts made to have a Child Psychiatry inpatient unit at St Andrew's Community Hospital in Siglap, in collaboration with Dr Stephanie Leonard, before the Child Psychiatry Inpatient Unit (CPIU) was established in WH in 1980 under Dr Goh Choo Woon and then, by Dr Pushpa Bose for the next ten years.

The CPIU was an 18-bed unit converted from the old Matrons' quarters and enjoyed a more homely atmosphere than the rest of WH.

It was moved to the basement of Block 3 in the new WH in 1993, renamed the Child and Adolescent Inpatient Unit (CAIU). CAIU was led by Dr Aw Soh Choo. In 2005, the inpatient ward was reorganised to allow for graded levels of care, to allow



Children's One-Stop Psycho-Educational Services, which was led by then Dr Daniel Fung



Child Psychiatry team 2009, March 2010

disturbed patients and recovered patients to be at different ends of the ward, with space set aside for sports and recreation. The new ward was renamed Sunrise Wing.

In 1993, the new WH was opened, and the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry was formed and headed by Dr Cai Yiming. Over the years, the department developed various services to address specific needs, such as Children's One-Stop Psycho-Educational Services, which was led by then Dr Daniel Fung. The Autism Clinic, which is led by Dr Sung Min, was set up to manage behavioural and emotional problems in children with autism. With the National Mental Health Blueprint, community teams were developed over five years and spearheaded by the department, working across three hospitals: WH, Kangar Kerbau Women's and Children's Hospital (KKH) and National University Hospital (NUH).

Table 1: Heads of Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Year	Head	Service/ Department
1970	Dr Wong Sze Tai	Child Guidance Clinic
1982	Dr Goh Choo Woon	Child Psychiatric Inpatient Unit
1982	Dr Pushpa Bose	Child Psychiatric Inpatient Unit
1993	Dr Aw Soh Choo	Child and Adolescent Inpatient Unit
1993	Dr Cai Yiming	Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
2007	A/Prof Daniel Fung	Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
2011	Dr Ong Say How	Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

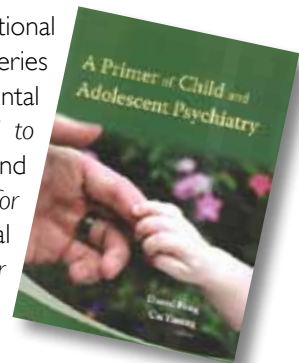
Despite heavy clinical and teaching workloads, CGC has had a clear research agenda right from its inception. Dr Wong Sze Tai encouraged multi-sectoral research well before it was popular to do so. One example was their work with the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports on a prospective four-year study of the effects of kindergarten versus home care for children as the government was encouraging women to go to work. A 1979 report, titled "The child and changing family patterns in Singapore", stated that children in kindergarten did better in mathematics and children who stayed at home had better language

development, but these effects were temporary. This research led to a white paper that went up to then

Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, which later led to the development of the National Family Council. It also received prominent attention in the mainstream media. CGC also collaborated with Dr Aline Wong, who later became Senior Minister of State for Health and Education, for research on low-cost housing and children.

Published works

Since 1998, Times Books International has been publishing a well-received series of books on issues in children's mental health. Titles include: *Help Your Child to Cope: Understanding Childhood Stress* and *Raise Your Child Right: A Parenting Guide for the 0-6 Years Old*. In 2008, the first local textbook on Child Psychiatry, *A Primer of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, was published by World Scientific.



Child Psychiatry in Singapore today

Child Psychiatry in Singapore has grown from an ad hoc, part-time service to a full department with 12 consultants, six medical officers, six clinical psychologists and three medical social workers, with a full complement of nurses and administrative staff. From 550 children and families a year in 1980, CGC now sees just under 3,000 a year in 2011.

Future of Child Psychiatry in Singapore

Going forward, the plan is for continued integration of services in KKH and NUH, and to strengthen links with community agencies to enhance mental healthcare for the future of our nation. **SMA**



A/Prof Daniel Fung is Chairman, Medical Board, at the Institute of Mental Health. He is a firm believer in the concept that in order to be a good specialist, one needs to be an excellent generalist and that taking a good family history in Child Psychiatry will help us understand the problems in a child better.



Dr Tor Phern Chern is currently a registrar in Forensic Psychiatry and employed by the Singapore Armed Forces.