

## Adolescent Medicine Service

Adolescence is the development stage between childhood and adulthood, where one is no longer a child but not yet an adult and at the stage of wanting independency but yet scared to be independent. Adolescence is also a time of "considerable physical, cognitive and social growth and change" (Hoffman, 1996). This may lead to difficulties in adjusting and adapting as one cope with the transition as well as the pending new expectations and responsibilities of the next stage of life, which may be further complicated by their medical illnesses.

We believe that effective intervention in adolescence can minimize the risk of morbidity and early mortality in adulthood. In view of the these needs, a team of dedicated Paediatricians and Psychiatrist (from NUH's University Children's Medical Institute) has recently established the Adolescent Medicine Service at National University Hospital, with a strong support from the Departments as well the hospital. The team also comprises of various supporting healthcare professional such as Psychologist, Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist, Dietician, Medical Social Worker, Nurse Educator, and the like.

The mission of the Adolescent Medicine Service is to provide comprehensive, multidisciplinary health care, health promotion as well as psychosocial support for young people between ages of 10-19. This is achieved through clinical consultation, counseling, therapy, advocacy, education and research activities.

### Services and Facilities

The unit provides inpatient services, where patients are admitted in children wards (an 8-bedder Adolescent ward will be ready in year 2009), separate outpatient clinical services at Children's Clinic @ Level 4, which is located next to children playground of main building as well as a 'hang-out' area called "the Sanctuary" catered for both inpatients and outpatients adolescents, which is equipped with adolescent-friendly entertainment such as Playstation, Wii, computer terminals, television, board games and magazines.

We take special interests in pertinent adolescent issues such as psychosocial problems, stress management, obesity, eating disorders, self harm, suicides and chronic illness with compliance issues.

Adolescent Medicine Service also coordinates the relevant services from various existing resources, such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, dietetic, medical social services, art therapy, play therapy, and volunteer teachers, and our aim is to achieve optimal results in the care of young people. The various resources form a multi-disciplinary team in providing the following services:

- Advocacy for young people
- Adolescent and family counseling and therapy
- Education for young people & parents
- Transitional care planning and management
- Discharge planning and networking with other community services
- Weight management Program
- Eating Disorder Management Program
- Inpatient art and play therapy
- Inpatient tutoring by volunteer teacher

## **First Run of the Adolescent Weight Management Program**

Towards right eating, exercise and self-esteem (TREES) is the slogan and name of the adolescent weight management program.

The first run of our TREES Program started on 30 Oct 2008. Each program will run over a three-month period and involves the Adolescent Physicians, Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist, Dietician as well as the Psychologist. The program also involves the input and commitment from the adolescent's parents/guardians/carers to ensure that support from the home environment, in conjunction with the health care team, can produce optimal and sustainable outcomes.

Click here for more information on [TREES](#).

### **Referrals**

A Physician/Doctor referral is required into the adolescent medicine service (and assessment done before admitting into the TREES program). Click [here](#) for the referral form.

For more information, please contact Ms Doris Yek (Adolescent Nurse):

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This is a service provided by the University Children's Medical Institute (UCMI), NUH.  
For more information on UCMI, please click [here](#).