

Singapore medical trio in Cairo to treat children evacuated from Gaza

The paediatricians on team are first foreign docs Egypt has allowed to be deployed to its hospitals

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CAIRO – In a hospital along the Nile River, a trio of Singapore healthcare professionals will see to and treat Palestinian children affected by the conflict in Gaza.

The team, with their specialised knowledge, includes the first foreign doctors that Egypt has allowed to be deployed to its hospitals.

The two senior paediatricians and a senior nurse manager flew over on request from the Egyptian government and will be aiding those affected by the ongoing conflict – happening some 400km away from the hospital.

From Sept 20 to 22, the three women will conduct specialist consultations and ward rounds with their Egyptian counterparts at the Nasser Institute Hospital located in Cairo.

Their patients will be those who have been evacuated from Gaza for

treatment in Egypt.

The team, which was identified based on the needs of the visit, has decades of experience in treating children. An earlier Singapore contingent had in April identified blood and kidney disorders as issues that needed specialised attention.

The most experienced is Professor Yap Hui Kim, head and emeritus consultant of the paediatric nephrology, dialysis and renal transplantation division at the Khoo Teck Puat National University Children's Medical Institute at the National University Hospital (NUH).

Prof Yap, 71, set up NUH's renal unit for children in the 1980s.

She is joined by Clinical Associate Professor Joyce Lam Ching Mei, 48, senior consultant for paediatric haematology and oncology at KK Women's and Children's Hospital, and Ms Noor Haziah Hussain, 46, a senior nurse manager at NUH's paediatric department.

They will also deliver symposi-



Clinical Associate Professor Joyce Lam Ching Mei (left) and senior nurse manager Noor Haziah Hussain. They, together with Professor Yap Hui Kim, have flown to Cairo at the request of the Egyptian government. PHOTO: LIANHE ZAOBAO

ums to facilitate medical training and professional exchange in the fields of nephrology, which covers kidney disease, and haematology, which looks at blood conditions and disorders.

Speaking to the media alongside his Egyptian counterpart Abdel Fattah al-Sisi on Sept 20, President Tharman Shanmugaratnam said Singapore will continue working with Egypt to help civilians from

Gaza.

President Tharman, who is on a four-day state visit to Egypt, said: "This marks the first time Egypt has allowed foreign doctors to be deployed to its hospitals, and we appreciate that this role was accorded to Singapore."

The visit to Nasser Institute Hospital follows another visit in April by a contingent of eight individuals from the Singapore Armed Forces and one from the Ministry of Health.

They were sent to assess the medical needs of Palestinians and other civilians from Gaza who were being treated in Egypt.

In end-2024, a team of medical professionals in Singapore had also provided tele-medical services and consultations to a United Arab Emirates-led hospital ship treating casualties from Gaza.

Prof Lam said that information gathered from the needs assessment in April reflected that some of the evacuees from Gaza at Nasser Institute Hospital have complex medical problems that need specialised care.

She and Ms Haziah attended an SG60 reception in Cairo on Sept 19, where they spoke to media covering the state visit.

She said: "The two areas that they have identified included patients with blood disorders as well as kidney disorders... We've been requested to come and contribute expertise and also to jointly participate in patient care with our Egyptian counterparts."

Among the patients Ms Haziah will be working with is a teenager who is currently undergoing dialysis.

She hopes to use the opportunity to learn from the Egyptian medical staff who have experience in dealing with a high volume of patients with complex issues.

"We hope to learn how they pro-

vide the healthcare infrastructure for the children with chronic illness," she said.

Prof Lam said through this visit, her team hopes to establish a relationship with Nasser Institute Hospital, cultivating one where they can also contribute in the longer term.

"Personally, I find it a very meaningful opportunity to be able to contribute to the humanitarian assistance of these children who have been through very, very difficult circumstances," she added.

Prof Yap, who did not attend the reception as she had not yet arrived in Cairo, told The Sunday Times separately that the team is exploring collaborations with its Egyptian counterparts on the treatment of children with existing kidney diseases.

They will focus on the complex types of glomerulonephritis, a disease caused by the inflammation of small blood vessels in the kidneys.

They will also look into collaborations in treating children who need dialysis, in particular infants, she said.

Senior Minister of State for Health Tan Kiat How, who is part of President Tharman's delegation on the trip, told media at the reception that the medical team's visit was a special arrangement made at the request of the Egyptian government due to the cases that require very specialised support and care.

He said: "Although it's a small team here... I think it's still a very meaningful way of contributing to the humanitarian crisis that's happening in this part of the world."

"And even though Singapore is a very small country, we hope to do our part and we want to make sure that whatever we do makes a meaningful difference for the people here."

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