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A monthly e-newsletter by NUH GP Liaison Centre

Specialist in Focus



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Dr Cheong Wai Kit graduated from the University of Malaya in 1990. He obtained his postgraduate qualification from the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh and Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1997. He is also a Fellow of the Academy Medicine of Singapore.

Dr Cheong's special interest is in recurrent & advance colorectal cancer and diagnostic and therapeutic endoscopy. He is also heading the Colorectal Oncology Tumour Group at the National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS).

Clinical Updates

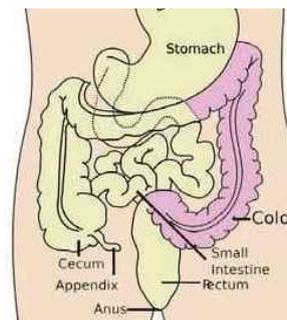
Colorectal cancer rates may have levelled off

The rate at which people develop colorectal cancer – the most common cancer here – appears to have plateaued. This suggests that preventive measures here, including screening, may be working and raises hopes that the incidence of colorectal cancer may decline in the coming years.

More than 1,700 people here are diagnosed with colorectal cancer every year and more than 700 die from it. It is among the top three cancer killers here.

The number of people getting such cancer had been rising steadily since 1973 – until a decade ago, said Dr Yong Wei Peng, a senior consultant at the National University Cancer Institute, Singapore.

Between 2003 to 2007, 40.6 men and 29.1 women per 100,000 were diagnosed with colorectal cancer, figures from the Singapore Cancer Registry show.



They dipped to 39.4 men and 27.1 women in the period of 2008 to 2012.

Dr Yong said: "It is too early to conclude if this represents year-to-year fluctuation or true reduction in colorectal cancer incidence. But he is cautiously optimistic that a smaller proportion of the population will develop this highly preventable cancer in the coming years because screening rates here have been improving.

Click [here](#) to read more about colorectal cancer.



GP Liaison Centre (GPLC)

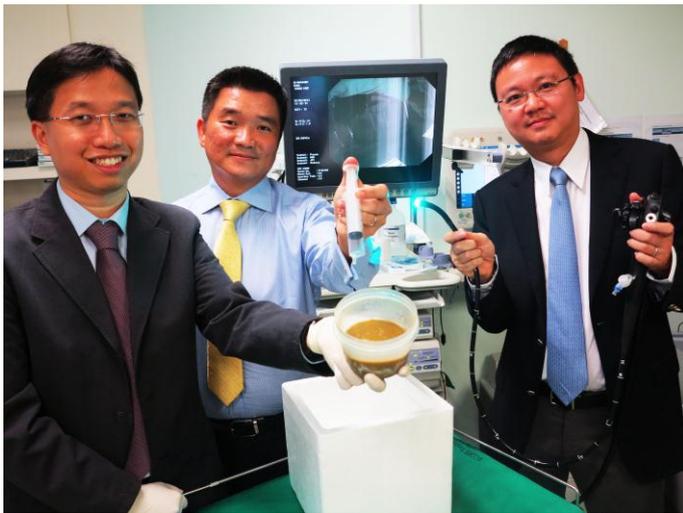
Mr Davin Wangsa or Ms Zanda Chiang

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Happening @ NUH

First fecal microbiota transplantation performed in Singapore

There is now hope for patients with resistant or recurrent *Clostridium difficile* (*C. diff*) infection, a condition that can be deadly for some.



From right to left: Dr David Ong (Lead of REANIMATE team, Consultant and Clinical Director, Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology), Dr Nicholas Chew (Consultant and Clinical Director, Division of Infectious Diseases), Dr Calvin Koh (Registrar, Division of Gastroenterology & Hepatology)

The REANIMATE programme, started by doctors from the National University Hospital (NUH) divisions of Gastroenterology & Hepatology, Infectious Diseases, and Microbiology, has performed the fecal microbiota transplant (FMT) in Singapore, and possibly Southeast Asia, to treat patients with *C. diff* infection.

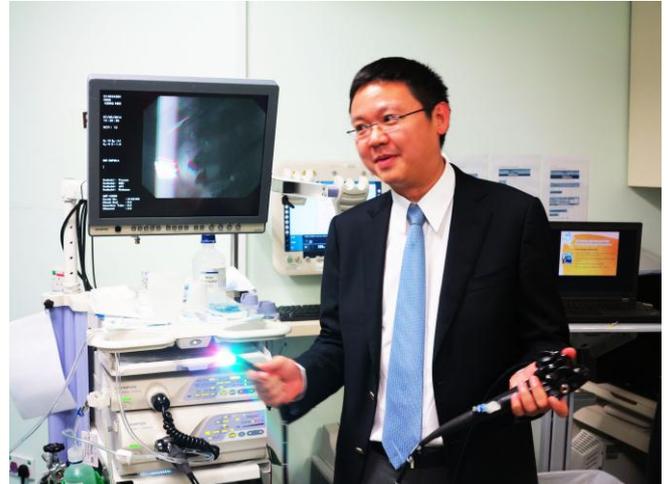
Upcoming GP CME Events

Date	Topic
21 June	Aero-Digestive Disorders – “A consolidated approach to children with upper airway and gastrointestinal problems”
19 July	Practical Updates on Haematology for GPs and Family Physicians

Please note that all CME events will be held at **the Seminar Room T1-01 unless otherwise stated.**

**NUHS Tower Block, Level 1
1E Kent Ridge Road,
Singapore 119228.**

**Please CALL us @ 6772 5695 / 5079
for registration & enquiries**



The normal gastrointestinal tract contains millions of different good bacteria and other microorganisms, which are essential in maintaining good gut health. Antibiotic therapy can disrupt the balance of these normal microorganisms, and allow some disease-causing bacteria to flourish and release toxins that damage the cells lining the intestinal wall.

One such bacterium is *C. diff*, which may cause severe diarrhoea, blood in stools, abdominal pain, and fever, as well as other symptoms. In some severe cases, it can also result in the patient requiring bowel resection, sepsis and even death. While it can affect patients of any age group, it tends to be more severe in the elderly and the very ill.

The widespread and sometimes indiscriminate use of antibiotics within the community and in hospitals has resulted in a significant and sustained increase in the incidence of antibiotic-associated *C. diff* infection and diarrhoea.

The first line of treatment for *C. diff* infection is the withdrawal of the causative antibiotics. Other antibiotics are then used to treat the *C. diff* infection but these are not always successful, due to the increasing antibiotic resistance phenomenon. Even with successful treatment, the recurrence rate for the patient remains as high as 15-25%. FMT offers hope to such difficult to treat patients with a high success rate.

Click [here](#) to read more about this new transplant.

