

GP IN-SYNC

A monthly e-newsletter by
NUH GP Liaison Centre



GP Appointment
Hotline: +65 6772 2000

September 2016

Featured Doctors of the Month



Dr Ida Ismail-Pratt graduated from Glasgow University in 1997 and obtained her specialist qualifications (MRCOG) in 2010. She had 14 years experience working in obstetrics & gynaecology in the United Kingdom and has come over to join the NUH Gynaecology Oncology Team working in particular in cancer screening and prevention.

Dr Ida Ismail-Pratt

MBChB (Glasgow),
MRCOG, BSCCP, DFSRH

Consultant,
Division of Gynaecologic
Oncology,
Department of
Obstetrics &
Gynaecology, NUH

Apart from being a specialist in obstetrics & gynaecology, she is also a United Kingdom accredited colposcopist working within the NHS Cervical Screening Programme. Her interests are pre-invasive disease, cancer screening and prevention including multi-disciplinary approach to care of women with pre-invasive disease.

Dr Ida is the lead director of the pre-invasive, cancer screening and early detection programme.



Dr Arundhati Gosavi

MBBS (India), DGO &
DNB (India), MRCOG (UK)

Associate Consultant,
Division of Reproductive
Maternal Fetal Medicine,
Department of Obstetrics
& Gynaecology, NUH

Dr Arundhati obtained her undergraduate (MBBS) and postgraduate degree (DGO, DNB) from India in 2004. She then obtained her membership of Royal college of Obstetrics and Gynecology (MRCOG, UK) in 2009. She has been working at NUH since 2010 and is an accredited specialist in India and Singapore.

Having worked as a specialist in Obstetrics and Gynaecology in various countries including India, Maldives and Oman previously, she caters to women from various cultural & ethnic backgrounds.

Her main area of interest in general and high-risk obstetrics and fetal medicine, and includes adolescent gynaecology, sexual & reproductive health and contraception. She is a promoter of natural birth and women centred care.

She has a special interest in medical education, and is involved in undergraduate medical education and various international clinical trials as part of her research career.

News Bulletin

Bowel Disease Sufferers at Higher Risk of Anxiety

Most acquaintances of 47-year-old Nidhi Swarup would consider her an active and outgoing person. But for about two years after she was diagnosed with a debilitating inflammatory bowel disease in 2011, she became increasingly anxious, reclusive and afraid to venture outdoors. Inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD), such as Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis, cause inflammation in the gut, as well as other parts of the body including the eyes, joints and skin. Sufferers of the chronic condition experience symptoms ranging from dizziness, headaches and fatigue to abdominal pain and persistent diarrhoea, which can severely affect their ability to function normally in their daily life. "I started cutting down on all my active days to the point where my life came to a standstill.

Even going to a nearby mall made me feel panicky and insecure; I didn't know what would trigger a flare-up and when that happened, the need to go to the toilet can be so urgent," said Mrs Swarup, who quit her full-time job as executive director of the Foundation of Rotary Clubs (Singapore) to manage her condition.

A condition which used to be rare in Asia and more common in the West, IBD is on the rise here. In Singapore, an estimated 2,000 people have the condition, a figure that has dramatically increased since the fewer than 10 cases reported at a local hospital two decades ago, said Dr David Ong, senior consultant at the Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology at National University Hospital (NUH).



GP Liaison Centre (GPLC)

GP Appointment Hotline: +65 6772 2000

Visit us at http://www.nuh.com.sg/nuh_gplc/

News Bulletin Continued...

A Psychological Burden

It is currently not known what causes IBD. Those with a family history tend to have a higher risk of getting it. In Singapore, Indians seem to be more vulnerable to the disease than the Chinese, said Dr Ong.



When Mrs Midhi Swarup was diagnosed with Crohn's disease, she was shocked to learn that she would have to live with the disease for the rest of her life. She now takes at least 11 pills daily.

While IBD is not usually life-threatening, its rising trend is a cause for concern due to its huge impact on quality of life. A recent study by researchers from the University of Toronto found that IBD sufferers are twice as likely to suffer from general anxiety disorders compared to those without the condition. Patients often experience a "double jeopardy", they said in a press release.

Not only do sufferers grapple with the physical symptoms, which can affect their daily lives and sometimes cause embarrassment, they also experience psychological effects of living with the incurable chronic disease. The study, which was published last year in the medical journal, *Inflammatory Bowel Diseases*, also found that women sufferers were particularly vulnerable to anxiety disorders compared to male patients.

For Mrs Swarup, the anxiety began two years before she was diagnosed with Crohn's disease. In 2009, she began experiencing a host of incapacitating symptoms after a holiday in Europe. After consulting various doctors, none of whom could pinpoint a cause, Mrs Swarup had wondered if she was dying from an unidentifiable illness. "It was a confusing time for me. I don't normally cry easily but once in the middle of a family dinner, I suddenly broke down because I felt like I was on a verge of collapsing from some horrible mysterious illness.

At one point, I was preparing for the worst by telling my three children to be independent and start doing things on their own," she said. Mrs Swarup was diagnosed in 2011 after severe diarrhoea landed her in the Accident and Emergency department. While a diagnosis provided some relief, she was shocked to learn that she would have to live with the disease for the rest of her life. She now takes at least 11 pills daily. There is currently no cure for IBD, but effective treatments such as biologics — including a newly available one which specifically targets inflammation in the gut — can help patients suppress inflammation and keep the disease at bay, said Dr Ong.

With the majority of IBD patients requiring medication for life, Dr Ling said anxiety and depression can strike especially when the condition is poorly controlled. "Moreover, the condition tends to strike during patients' most productive years, around the 20s and 30s, affecting all aspects of their quality of life," added Dr Ong. Both doctors said psychological support should be offered to patients as part of treatment.

According to Dr Ong, about 5 to 10 per cent of the IBD patients he sees require some form of psychological support. To help patients cope with the disease's emotional effects, a psychologist and social worker are part of NUH's multidisciplinary IBD service. It also runs an IBD hotline, manned by an advance practice nurse who specialises in the disease and provides advice to patients over the phone to help them cope with the symptoms.

Noting the lack of a non-medical support system for IBD patients after she was diagnosed, Mrs Swarup started the Crohn's and Colitis Society of Singapore in 2012. The society organises talks and runs a patient support group. Last year, it launched a "Can't Wait" card for IBD sufferers, in the hope that they will get priority in toilet queues by flashing it. "When I learnt that my condition was classified 'mild', I wondered how patients with more severe IBD go through it. Living with the disease can be very emotionally traumatic. Through the society, I hope to support fellow patients and help them make sense of this puzzling disease," said Mrs Swarup.



GP Liaison Centre (GPLC)

GP Appointment Hotline: +65 6772 2000

Visit us at http://www.nuh.com.sg/nuh_gplc/

What's Happening @ NUH

The Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology is proud to be a part of the distinguished panel of specialist speakers in the Singapore Health & Biomedical Congress (SHBC).

Presented by the National Healthcare Group, the 14th edition of the SHBC brings together healthcare professionals, research scientists, academics, industry experts and stakeholders with the ultimate goal of advancing healthcare to the next level.

In line with this year's theme "Forging a Sustainable Relationship-Based Healthcare System", the congress will feature prominent local and overseas speakers selected for the Education, Population Health and Mental Health Tracks.

Our Consultant Dr Susan Logan is the leading Champion for the Women's Wellness Track. Presented by the National University Hospital, Tan Tock Seng Hospital and NHG Polyclinics comprising doctors, physiotherapists, nurse clinicians, paediatrics, dieticians and psychologists, the subject topics range from common to life threatening, politically hot to front page news, from disease prevention to health promotion & from multiple applications to non-medical approaches.

Besides Dr Susan Logan, our team of NUH doctors comprising A/Prof Roy Ng, Dr Joseph Ng, Dr Ida Ismail-Pratt, A/Prof Chan Shiao-Yng and Dr Lim Min Yu will be delivering the talks.

Programme Highlights

- menstrual issues
- cervical cancer prevention in the new era
- eating disorders – medical complications
- reproductive years
- infertility
- zika virus and antenatal care
- physiotherapy management of third degree tear
- intrauterine contraceptives devices
- breast self-examination
- non-contraceptive uses of contraceptives
- non-hormonal approaches for managing menopause
- exercise & anti ageing
- pelvic organ prolapse
- combined oral contraceptive pills and the 2nd most common gynae cancer in Singaporean women
- eating well as you age
- managing sleep problems in women

For more information and to register, please log onto www.shbc.com.sg

Upcoming CME Event

Date	Topic
24 September'16	An Update on Endocrine Disorders

Registration & lunch will start at 12.30 pm

Event Venue:

The Singapore Island Country Club
180 Island Club Road
Island Location, Upper Thomson Road
Ballroom 3, Level 3
Singapore 578774

Please visit our CME Portal at <https://nuhcme.com.sg/> for registration. For registration enquiries you may contact the GP Liaison Centre at gpl@nuhs.edu.sg

To unsubscribe from our monthly e-newsletter, please click [here](#).