

my *Alvernia*

Inspiring Healthy Living | Issue 46

Salt & Light Winner

Says 'Relationship Matters Most'



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After more than 2 years of the COVID pandemic, it is such a relief that Singapore is finally confident to start transiting to the endemic phase, with the easing of Safe Management Measures. I am thankful that throughout this difficult period, our Mount Alvernia team has supported each other closely in persevering to continue providing compassionate, excellent and holistic healthcare services to our patients and their loved ones.

In the last 2 years, we have continued our push for medical excellence and the adoption of modern technology such as robotics, to assist in surgeries. The usage of robotics has helped our Doctors and team to improve the access and accuracy in certain surgeries such as total prostatectomy and colorectal surgeries. Robot-assisted surgeries have also helped patients make a quicker recovery. From June 2021 till March 2022, we are happy to share that we performed 102 surgeries through the use of robotics.

At Mount Alvernia, we always seek to give back to the community. As part of our outreach efforts, we have been collaborating with Caritas Singapore since 2018 on the Smiles for Good programme (SFG). SFG provides suitable beneficiaries with free dentures, which helps brighten up their smiles and improve their nutrition and health. The pandemic interrupted the programme in 2020 and 2021 but that did not deter our Community Outreach team in progressing the SFG project, which is currently in the midst of helping the fifth batch of beneficiaries.

Despite the gloom Covid-19 brought, there were some little bundles of joy, in the forms of baby Chong and baby Bryan, who were born in our hospital at the start of 2022. Baby Chong popped out four days before his due date, joining two other babies in Singapore to become 2022's first babies. Baby Bryan arrived 3 minutes after the start of the Year of the Tiger. Their parents were very excited for the new addition to their family. We are proud to have been a part of their joy and wish them well on their journey on caring for their newborns.

I would also like to congratulate the winners of our 17th Values-In-Practice (VIP) Award 2021. The VIP award is presented to staff, nominated by their colleagues, who practise our hospital's core values of - compassion, humility, integrity, respect and peace, through their work and support for patients and other colleagues. We are particularly happy for our senior staff nurse, Rebecca, for winning the Salt & Light Award. This award is presented to colleagues who have won 4 consecutive rounds of our VIP award.

Moving forward, my team and I look forward to the completion of our upcoming integrated oncology services centre in the 3rd quarter this year, and the mother and child centre in the middle of next year. Meanwhile, we will be focusing on supporting our healthcare team clear the backlog of postponed elective cases and surgeries. To everyone who have journeyed with us thus far, a big thank you for your tremendous support, and we will strive to continue to Serve All with Love.



Dr James Lam Kian Ming
CEO, Mount Alvernia Hospital

Editor Han May Ching | Writers Weena Lim • Stella Thng | My Alvernia Magazine is a publication by Mount Alvernia Hospital, 820 Thomson Road, Singapore 574623 | Contact Information Please email mah@mtalvernia.sg and address all correspondence to: The Editor, My Alvernia.

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A Look-back at Mount Alvernia Hospital's 60th Anniversary

In the interview with TODAYonline last year, our CEO shares about how the Mount Alvernia Hospital family continues to play our part for Singapore's healthcare landscape.



Given a better time, Mount Alvernia Hospital would have planned a celebration in 2021. After all, it is not every day that we turn 60 years old. However, the tumultuous last two years saw COVID-19 ensnaring Singapore and battering our exhausted healthcare workers. A big celebration was obviously out of the question.

It is a sobering reminder of the sacrifice and hard work every single one of our Mount Alvernia Hospital team has put in, starting from our pioneers, the FMDM sisters who started the hospital from scratch. Sister Angela McBrien, Sister Mary Camillus Walsh and Sister Mary Baptista Hennessy first worked with tuberculosis patients at Tan Tock Seng Hospital, and later cared for patients in the Lepers Camp, an isolated community of lepers housed at Trafalgar Home in Woodbridge.



In 1952, when medical facilities in Singapore became increasingly crowded and more nursing care was sorely needed, the Sisters were given a chance to start a private hospital. It took several years of fundraising and hard work before it was officially opened on March 4, 1961.

Here are some highlights from the interview:

1 Mount Alvernia Hospital is Singapore's only not-for-profit private hospital offering tertiary care



Built upon the sweat and tears of 30 Roman Catholic nuns, who were the hospital's first staff, they were professionally trained in England as nurses, midwives, physiotherapists, radiographers, laboratory technicians and dispensers. However, their strong calling to Serve All with Love saw them pulling double duty as nurses while performing any and every clinical and operation duty, ranging from driving ambulances to cooking for patients, scrubbing off bloodstained sheets and more!

2 It is also the only acute general hospital in Singapore with a clinical pastoral care team

Looking after the emotional and spiritual needs of patients, their families and employees regardless of their religion, the clinical pastoral care team has brought much comfort and solace to many. The 16-member team, which includes three Sisters, is made up of Catholics and Christians trained in clinical pastoral education.

Dr Lam adds gratefully: "Our clinical pastoral care team is amazing and it's a unique service we provide. They play a very important role in patient care and also help our staff when they feel stressed. We also extend the service to our doctors. During this pandemic, we have appealed to our staff not to be shy to reach out to our clinical pastoral care colleagues who can lend a listening ear. They are all trained to give advice." One of the hospital's most unique, and beloved, features is its chapel which organised regular masses before COVID-19 hit. A baby blessing service is also available to all babies born in Mount Alvernia Hospital, regardless of their parents' religion. All pastoral care and baby blessing services are provided free of charge.

3 "Quarrelling peacefully"

Dr Lam joined Mount Alvernia Hospital in 2017. He said that he was inspired by its rich history and founders.

Through tough times like these, Dr Lam hopes that the team would be reminded of and embrace the hospital's core values of "compassion, humility, integrity, respect and peace". 'Peace', in particular, resonated with him as he had never come across such a core value in all the organisations that he had been to.

"... I like to joke that in Mount Alvernia, when we quarrel, we try to do so peacefully. If we can embrace this value (of peace), it will help us grow as a person. If we practise it, patients and relatives will benefit."

4 Two new medical facilities coming up

Although COVID-19 delayed the construction efforts, the hospital is looking forward to two new buildings. The first is a 10-storey block for maternity and paediatric services, including delivery suites and a neonatal intensive care unit. An integrated cancer centre is also being built and hopefully, will be ready this year.

5 We have several Outreach programmes for the needy

At Enabling Village in the Lengkok Bahru-Redhill area and Agape Village in Toa Payoh, patients enjoy heavily subsidised treatments at the general practitioner and dental clinics. In addition, the inclusive dental clinic at Enabling Village is sensitive to the needs of the disabled. It has a tilter for dental works so that patients need not get out of their wheelchairs to get treated. Fees start at a very affordable \$10 a visit.



Scan this QR code to read more:



Mount Alvernia Hospital Welcomes 2022's First New Year and Chinese New Year Babies



Baby Chong



Baby Bryan

Say hello to Baby Chong, one of three babies who eagerly popped into the world at the stroke of midnight on 1 Jan 2022 and Bryan Tan who arrived at 12:03am in the Year of the Tiger.



Talk about an unforgettable countdown. As the rest of the Singapore toasted a brand new year, Mr Chong Chin Teck and Madam Teoh Pei Ferng were experiencing a different kind of excitement that brought new life to their cosy family.

Accountant Madam Teoh, 35, was due to give birth to her second child on Jan 5. Fortunately, the Chongs had wisely avoided making countdown plans in case the baby decided to make an early entrance, because that was exactly what happened. "We had a feeling she would arrive early because our first daughter was also born one week early," said Mr Chong, a finance manager.

Indeed, on the last day of 2021, Madam Teoh started experiencing labour pains in the morning. It lasted all day and at 11.30pm, the Chongs started wondering if they might be blessed with a baby born on New Year's Day. Even better, their second princess arrived just as the clock struck midnight!

Weighing in at 2.84kg, Baby Chong instantly made headlines as she joined two other babies in Singapore to become 2022's first babies. "Everyone counts down in front of a TV, but I joined my wife at the hospital and it was a different kind of anticipation," said papa Chong.

For baby Bryan, his mum, Ms Nguyen experienced slight pain and discomfort the whole day on the eve of CNY, but was hoping that baby Bryan would not come until Feb 2 as they quite liked the number 02/02/2022. His parents were having a reunion dinner with their family when mum's pain started to become worse, and she had to take breaks in between eating. "Our family was talking to the baby, saying: 'Wait, let Mama eat dinner first, please.' But he wanted to come out to meet us already," she said, laughing.

The couple, who have been married for three years and have a 16-month-old boy, went to the hospital at 9.30pm and Ms Nguyen was admitted soon after. "The doctor was very excited during the birth, telling me to try and push as best as I can so that Bryan would come out at midnight," Ms Nguyen said.



Mount Alvernia Hospital is proud of our very own New Year and CNY babies and presented them with their very first gifts that included hampers and a \$188 angbao. Welcome to the world, little ones!



Nipping Prostate Cancer With the Help of Robots

How can robots treat patients with prostate cancer? Senior consultant urologist Dr Png Keng Siang from FeM Surgery @ Alvernia offers tips on minimally-invasive robot-assisted biopsy and surgery.

Robot-Assisted Biopsy

How does it work?

Your doctor needs to remove small tissue samples of the prostate for analysis and one of the methods to do so is to conduct a robot-assisted prostate biopsy. Even though the suspected cancerous area in the prostate gland can be very tiny – just 1mm to 2mm – the robot-assisted biopsy is particularly useful at detecting cancers at a very early stage.

This is because the procedure incorporates an MRI scan of the prostate gland into the targeting process of the biopsy. Using a computer software to guide the robotic arm to the exact spot of the prostate gland where the suspected cancer site is, the urologist can precisely retrieve tissue samples. The patient will be put under light sedation during the process but can be discharged on the very day, once he awakes from the sedation.

Benefits of robot-assisted biopsy:

A traditional prostate biopsy uses only ultrasound guidance, which cannot identify small cancers, thus hindering early detection and treatment. Thanks to the MRI scan in a robot-assisted biopsy, this increases the accuracy of detecting prostate cancer up to 80 per cent. The patient thus avoids going through multiple biopsies and can focus on getting treated as soon as possible. This procedure also allows the urologist to cover the entire prostate gland, to ensure any and every bit of cancer is caught.

Robot-Assisted Surgery

How does it work?

Formally known as robot-assisted radical prostatectomy, this is an advanced and minimally-invasive form of surgery that is now the surgery of choice for prostate cancer. By improving vision for the doctor via the use of advanced instrumentation and technology, he can then finely dissect and remove the prostate gland, and reconstruct the urinary passage smoothly.

Benefits of robot-assisted surgery:

Patients recover quicker and the risk of complication is reduced, compared to an open surgery. Patients can be discharged as quickly as three to four days after the operation. This surgery is most suitable for those whose prostate cancer is confined to the prostate gland (early stage) and has not spread to the surrounding organs such as the rectum, bladder or lymph nodes.



Dr Png Keng Siang
FeM Surgery @ Alvernia
Mount Alvernia Hospital
Medical Centre A #07-54

Colorectal Cancer Treatment Gets a (Robotic) Helping Hand

With colorectal cancer being Singapore's top killer, using robotic technology can potentially save many lives. Find out more from General and Colorectal surgeon, Dr Dean Koh from Colorectal Clinic Associates.



“Using high-definition optics, motion scaling and tremor filtering, the surgeon can use up to ten times magnification. This will greatly improve his or her precision and accuracy.”

Robotic surgery = done by robots?

Fear not, you will have a proper surgeon in your operating theatre. “A common misconception is that robotic surgery is done autonomously by a robot. This is not the case. The surgeon carries out the surgery by controlling the robotic arms and instruments through a console, which is physically separate from the patient’s side,” explains Dr Koh.

Robotic surgery vs standard surgery: which is better?

Robotic technology is used to perform minimally invasive surgery (also known as laparoscopic surgery). It is more accurate than standard laparoscopy and conventional open surgery, because the robotic instruments can mimic hand and wrist functions. Using high-definition optics, motion scaling and tremor filtering, the surgeon can use up to ten times magnification. This will greatly improve his or her precision and accuracy.

Recovery-wise, patients also experience significantly less pain after their operation. They can regain normal mobility and function earlier too. As robotic colon surgery patients tend to suffer lower incidences of wound infection, lung infections and bowel ileus (or paralysis), this translates to shorter hospitalisation time. They can thus return to work and their family life more quickly.

Just like conventional open surgery, robotic colon surgery can remove cancer completely and survival rate is the same. “There is no compromise to the quality of cancer treatment with these minimally invasive techniques,” reiterated Dr Koh to debunk a common misconception.

When should the patient opt for robotic surgery?

“The robotic technique is ideal for rectal cancer resection, which removes the cancerous tumour in the rectum,” says Dr Koh. As the rectum is located in the narrow confines of the pelvis – imagine a tight, funnel-shaped space packed with all the organs and vital structures – robotic surgery’s greater accuracy is therefore very appreciated here. The surgeon can make use of improved optics, dexterity and accuracy of the robotic system to conduct a successful surgery, leading to improved outcomes.

In fact, this technique has been so successful that it is now used to remove tumours in all segments of the colon, not just the rectum.

Are there any cancers that do not suit robotic surgery?

Yes, those that are large, locally invasive and involve other nearby organs. “These cancers remain best treated surgically with the conventional open technique,” clarifies Dr Koh.

Post-robotic surgery options

After the tumour is removed, depending on the patient’s cancer stage, his or her surgeon may prescribe further treatment. Chemotherapy is usually added if the cancer has spread to the lymph nodes. Radiotherapy has also been useful in decreasing the risk of local recurrences. Thus, the doctor may select a combination of chemo and radiotherapy in certain stages of rectal cancer to shrink the tumour, so that there is complete resection of the tumour and the anal sphincter is preserved.



Dr Dean Koh
Colorectal Clinic Associates
Mount Alvernia Hospital
Medical Centre D #08-62

Six Burning Questions About Pregnancy, Nutrition and Labour Pains

Organised by Mount Alvernia Hospital and Singlife with Aviva, the 90-minute Facebook 'live' session held on 18 January 2022 featured speakers such as Senior Parentcraft Specialist & Lactation Counsellor, Rita Francis, and Dietitian, Jacqueline Low. Here are six commonly asked questions posed by our participants.



Q Are there any food that parents or mums should avoid during pregnancy? What about cheese, peanuts and seafood?

Jacqueline Low: I'm sure many parents would have read up on the things that are harmful to your baby. These include alcohol, which is not recommended during pregnancy although I do know of mums who drink. You're basically

taking a risk. There is no safe limit of alcohol that can be recommended, unfortunately. Also, raw food such as undercooked beef, half-cooked seafood and raw eggs. Some people forget that raw eggs come in many different forms. It is not just your soft-boiled eggs in the morning, which you should avoid as much as possible; it can be in mayonnaise or salad dressings too. With these foods, there can be a risk of salmonella which can be potentially harmful for the baby. With raw fish, there is a certain type of bacteria that can be passed to the baby too. Some mums also worry about taking certain types of fish because they hear about the mercury, such as large predatory fish like shark, swordfish, larger species of mackerel. But canned tuna imported to Singapore is completely fine.

Actually cheese, peanuts and seafood are completely safe to take. But do avoid cheese with live culture, such as blue cheese that has mould growing through it, or brie with mould surrounding it. Mozzarella on pizza is fine to take.



Q Should pregnant mums control their salt intake?

Jacqueline Low: This is generally not so much of a concern unless you have a higher risk of preeclampsia; for example, having a family history of high blood pressure or diabetes. Then yes, I'd say you want to control your salt intake such as not taking too much pickled or preserved food. But using soya sauce or oyster sauce in your cooking is still fine.

Q How should mums having severe vomiting ensure they have proper nutrition?

Jacqueline Low: For many mums in their first or even second trimester, they are constantly throwing up their food. Most of them will be admitted to hospital for rehydration. During this time, it can be very difficult to get the proper nutrition for the pregnancy. You must try to remain hydrated, which is the main thing. Maternal and regular supplements, even in the form of a drink' can really help. If you sip it very slowly over the course of the day, you're not getting that bulk volume that makes you want to throw up. Other useful foods such as those high in vitamin B6 such as oats, pork and bananas, if taken regularly, are proven to curb nausea.

Q How do pregnant mums prevent Gestational Diabetes Mellitus (GDM)?

Jacqueline Low: Unfortunately, there are not many studies to show what you can do to prevent GDM. Some have linked pre-pregnancy diets such as, a very high fat or high-saturated fat diet, to (a) higher rate of GDM. But it is important to remember the main risk factors are age, being Chinese (race) also predisposes you to GDM, and if during your previous pregnancies, you had a larger (birth rate) baby above 4kg, that tends to predict GDM for your subsequent pregnancies. Your Body Mass Index, being above 30, also puts you at risk. Unfortunately, there is not much evidence out there to prevent GDM but definitely, looking into the amount of fat in your current diet helps. The studies also found that exercise is closely linked. So, maintaining some exercise in your daily routine during pregnancy would be great.

Especially when you first get diagnosed and are not seeing a dietitian yet, a lot of mums tend to cut back (really excessively) on carbohydrates. That's also not a good thing. You need to have a balanced meal plan. You want to still be eating carbohydrates but not large amounts. For example, you should eat a big plate of Hokkien mee, washed down with a Coke. Maintain small intakes of carbohydrates throughout the day, at least two to three hours apart. Having small snacks in between meals is also recommended. No fasting or intermittent fasting or cutting out carbos completely.

Q How do you recognise when you are in labour, especially for first-time mums?

Rita Francis: There are three signs of labour: show, regular contractions and eruption of (the) water bag. These three do

not come in sequence. During pregnancy, the neck of the uterus is well sealed by a mucus plug. It loosens during labour and dislodges itself. As it comes long through your vagina, it looks pinkish, reddish, mucus plug, showing you that you are going into labour. Now if you ask me whether you need to rush down to the hospital – you don't need to. Wait for other signs, like the baby is giving you a good kick and moving. If you call your gynae and say you are having a bit of show, and if you should rush down to the hospital, most of the time their advice will be to make sure the baby is moving and kicking well, and wait for other signs to happen. It may take a day or the next few days for you to go into labour.

Contractions give you a squeeze from the back. Some women are really sensitive and it even radiates down your thighs. What is 'regular contractions'? From one contraction to another, the intensity of the pain gets more and more; the frequency is small and is narrower as well. Please come down to the hospital because you need a form of pain relief and most of the time, regular contractions synchronise with the opening of the cervix.

As for eruption of water bag, it either comes like a trickle or a sudden gush of water. Take a look at the amniotic fluid colour. Normally, it is clear. If it is greenish, it is not a very good sign as the baby may be distressed and has passed motion. When your amniotic fluid bursts, take note of the time and colour, seek advice from your gynae and you can come down to the hospital.

Q How do you differentiate Braxton hicks and real contractions?

Rita Francis: These are actual false contractions and they're good as they prepare you for a real labour. Braxton hicks comes and disappears. It is further apart, it's preparing you for the actual day. But if the contractions are very regular and you have the urge to pass motion; you're very uncomfortable; back is aching and you do not feel good, and you are not due yet, do give your doctor a ring to make sure you do not go into premature labour.

For more insights, do watch the entire video on our Mount Alvernia Hospital YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWWSM22eebQ&t=301s> or scan the QR code here:



You can also contact our Parentcraft at 6347 6641 or Nutrition & Dietetics at 6347 6702 for more information.

Salt & Light Winner Says 'Relationship Matters Most'



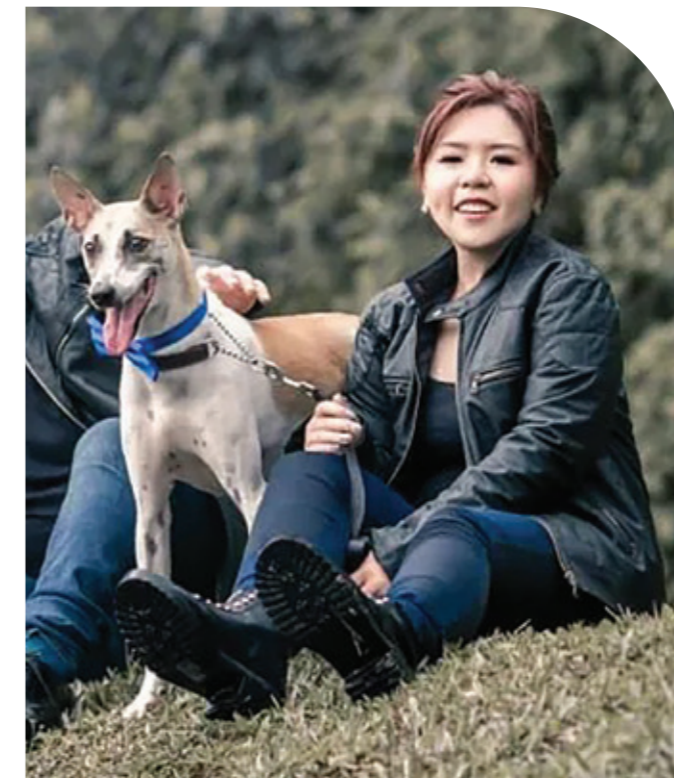
Rebecca receiving her Salt & Light Award badge and certificate from Dr James Lam during our Nurses' Day presentation on 30 July 2021.

Fondly known as the 'sunshine' of her ward, Rebecca shared that she was sincerely touched by the acknowledgement and appreciation from colleagues and this award was a testament to their support.

Delighted at the support of her colleagues, she says, "Our CHIRP values go hand-in-hand with caregiving and service roles. They remind us to extend warmth in our interactions with patients and colleagues and to welcome people to the hospital. They make a difference to our environment on a day-to-day basis. Our colleagues can be like a family that understands, supports, and bonds through difficulty together."

She shared, "In my five years here with the hospital, there were many occasions when I have appreciated our friendly and welcoming culture especially with its generous sharing and kind praises. Compassion exists too whenever some degree of flexibility is allowed in order to better support the needs of patients and their families. I can see that taking care of the emotional health of our patients and seeing to their concerns are important to us".

"Besides focusing on clinical-nursing care, my role here supports patients and their family members in other ways. I can see myself grow in empathy whenever I spend a little precious time just chatting with my patients and doing what I can to make them feel more comfortable and cared for. I feel satisfied when patients simply say 'Thank you for feeding me or taking care of me'. These words indicate to me that I am at least doing something good for them."



Rebecca with her pet 'Dazzler'

"Compassion exists too whenever some degree of flexibility is allowed in order to better support the needs of patients and their families."

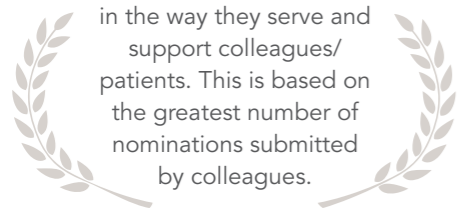
"New relationships begin whenever I meet new people who become friends. Whether it is a patient, a family member or a colleague, sometimes it is just about paying attention or giving reassurances when they are worried. I am so happy just to be there for them. I am encouraged to be supportive of my colleagues too. "My friends at work,

seniors and patients also give me strength with their smiles and joy. As a team, we share our knowledge and experiences with each other and in this way, we happily learn and grow together. That's why relationships matter most," added Rebecca.

As much as she loves her work, Rebecca also recognises the need for self-care to keep herself in a balanced and healthy condition. At the end of a hard day's work, the bubbly Rebecca unwinds by delighting in simple joys like going home for a nice shower and sharing her 'ME' time with her pet dog 'Dazzler'.

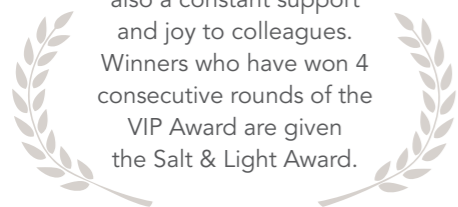
Values-In-Practice Award

An award for staff who have been seen to embody our MAH values in the way they serve and support colleagues/patients. This is based on the greatest number of nominations submitted by colleagues.



*Salt & Light Award

A special award for staff who are role models to others as they live out our MAH values. They are also a constant support and joy to colleagues. Winners who have won 4 consecutive rounds of the VIP Award are given the Salt & Light Award.



"...people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." – these words from American poet Maya Angelou inspires Senior Staff Nurse Rebecca Yap of Our Lady ward to always give her best to those around her. And she often reminds herself of this when she is caring for her patients and doing the nursing work that she loves so much.

Therefore, it comes as no surprise that Rebecca was given the 'Salt & Light Award'* which was presented to her by our CEO, Dr James Lam, at our Nurses' Day celebration last year. The award ceremony was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate our values together as it had been a while since we last presented one. Our previous award recipient was Susan Leow, Patient Service Officer from the Parentcraft Centre.

As Dr Lam shared, "My heartfelt congratulations to Rebecca for winning our Salt & Light Award, which came after her 4th consecutive win at our Values-in-Practice Award. We may always promote our core values, but when all is said and done, what is important is that we live by them. After all, that is what our VIP Award stands for. I believe that when we all do that, it will provide a positive influence and impact on people around us: our staff, patients and their families, and mission partners.

*Just as salt enhances flavour and aids healing, and light radiates warmth and is a source of hope and comfort, we are all called to be 'Salt & Light' for one another.

Brantley Lai Zit Hua, Food and Beverages

"Diligent and passionate soul. Besides being a dedicated chef, he also bravely took up additional admin responsibilities when the team was without an admin staff."

"Appreciated for his enthusiasm and willingness to always provide support for others. A model of thoughtfulness and integrity."

"Always striving to learn more, going the extra mile and often putting the needs of the team first. He has an admirable quality and caring attitude. It really shows when people work alongside him."



Thacaini Vasudevon, St Raphael

"A colleague whom colleagues know to be a compassionate person who does all she can to care and support both patients and colleagues."

"A good and helpful team player who is cheerful all the time. She comforts others just by giving them her full attention."

"She always reaches out to offer a hand to others when she sees them struggling. She is observant and takes every initiative to show kindness whenever she senses someone needs it."



Earl R. Vincent, Laboratory

"He is someone who always thinks of others first before himself. He is gracious in his words and actions and is able to handle many situations amicably."

"A humble and polite guy who knows how to share with others. A generous person who lends a hand when the department gets busy and needs help."

"He is a peaceful and pleasant person to be with."



Jenny Ling Siew Fong, St Raphael

"Her consideration for others drives her to complete her work as accurately as possible. She sincerely enjoys helping others. She is always ready and willing to extend her compassion and sympathy through her action and words."

"She devotes herself fully to patient care and nursing. She is very patient with people and she makes it a point to do her best and stay alert in every shift."

"She keeps improving her skills and works at maintaining harmonious relationships with all at work."



Roobaneswary Amurthalingam, Day Surgery

"Rooba has the friendliest personality around the hospital. She is also humble and is willing to give her best for all her colleagues."

"She shows a contagious smile every day and is an inspiration to colleagues."

"Rooba places others before herself. She does not hold back from helping others. She has MAH's core values embedded in her heart and thrives hard to practise the values."



17th Values-In-Practice (VIP) Award

- Compassion
- Humility
- Integrity
- Respect
- Peace

An award for staff who have been seen to practise MAH values in the way they serve and support colleagues/patients.

A. Jenyanthy, St Raphael

"She has good rapport with colleagues and doctors in the ward. She is so responsible and reliable that people can definitely count on her for support and contribution."

"She knows her job well and ensures her work is always done before her shift is over so her colleagues will not be inconvenienced."

"A pleasant and good natured person whom everyone enjoys working with."



Shaun Joshua Koh, Clinical Pastoral Care

"A person who is able to connect with everybody. Humble character and a gentle soul. Willing to take time to listen to other people's issues and situations."

"He has a pleasant and warm disposition which makes him very approachable to patients, their loved ones and fellow colleagues."

"He demonstrates humility and respect towards all he encounters. He is responsive to people's needs."



Periyampillai Muthuvelan (Muthu), Facility Management

"A person whom colleagues acknowledge and appreciate for working humbly in the back-end and handles the unseen tough work."

"A courageous staff who takes on challenging hands-on work without complaining and does it with an honest smile."

"His gentle smile and body language usually convey his friendly and caring personality."



Yvonne Chen, Clinical Pastoral Care

"Yvonne is gentle and kind towards colleagues. She's a helpful team member."

"Yvonne has a gentle way of reaching out to patients. She is very generous with sharing of her gifts with humility to her colleagues. I've worked closely with Yvonne and if I am a patient, I will feel very comforted to have her visit me."

"By nature, Yvonne is good in character, compassionate and loving. She always helps her colleagues and the patients she visits. We are thankful for having her in our department."



Mani Thiagarajan, Facility Management

"Recognised by his peers as the 'right strong arm' of the department, this person knows his work so well that he only needs minimum guidance. This is because he loves his work and does it with a sense of responsibility and integrity. He is approachable, trustworthy and never grumbles about work assignments."

"He shows compassion in his duty as he thinks of patients' interest first and so he does everything with loving care and thoroughness."

"He is always patient and calm in every situation. Hard work never deters his determination and willing attitude."




Our 61 Years of Care and Service to All

We celebrated our anniversary on 4 March. Stroll down memory lane with us as we trace the FMDM Sisters' journey of building Mount Alvernia Hospital over the last 61 years.


1961

On 4 March, Mount Alvernia Hospital started as a 60-bed hospital entirely staffed by the FMDM Sisters who were trained nurses. The first baby was delivered at the hospital on 12 March 1961.



1965-1971


The late Mr Lee Kuan Yew officially opened a new five-storey wing, which brought the total number of hospital beds to 127.



By 1971, three extensions of the building had been added and were officially opened by the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew.


1985

The Clinical Pastoral Care Department was established as part of holistic care to support patients and their relatives.



1996-1997

Medical Centre A was opened, adding medical suites, operating theatres, delivery suites, an endoscopy centre and rehabilitation centre to the hospital.



More medical suites were added with the completion of Medical Centre B.

The total number of licensed beds was increased to 303.

2016-2017

The Laboratory Services were redeveloped and expanded to provide increased capabilities and procedures based on the most contemporary medical laboratory methodologies and systems.



Our second outreach clinic comprising medical and dental services opened at Agape Village in Toa Payoh.

Successful transition from ISO 2008 standards to ISO 2015 standards hospital-wide.

2015

The opening of St Dominic medical and surgical ward and St Michael maternity ward provided additional bed capacity to reduce waiting time and increased inpatient admissions.



We officially opened our first outreach medical clinic at the Enabling Village located at Redhill to provide healthcare services to people with disability, the elderly and financially needy residents.


2014

Mr Gan Kim Yong, Minister for Health and Archbishop William Goh, officially opened Medical Centre D. The number of on-campus specialist clinics was increased to 89.



2013

Emeritus Archbishop Nicholas Chia officially opened our newly renovated Chapel.



We became the first hospital in Singapore to expand our magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) services for prostate, breast and magnetic resonance angiography (MRA) with the new 3 Tesla MRI digital scanner with Ambient Experience.

2011


Launched the Mammography Screening Centre.

Officially opened our first overseas office, Mount Alvernia Hospital Information Centre (MAHIC), in Jakarta on 6 May.

2009-2010


A hospital-wide community outreach programme was officially launched to bring health screening services to the poor and needy.

Launched and opened Alvernia Parentcraft Centre, a dedicated one-stop centre for antenatal care, childbirth education and newborn care.



2004

The Day Surgery Centre and the 24-hour Walk-in Clinic and Emergency Services were opened and ready to serve the public.



2018-2019

Our Alvernia Endoscopy Centre was redesigned into a one-stop service facility with a minor operating theatre so that patients could undergo colonoscopy and follow-up with other minor surgeries, if needed within the same premises.



Our electronic medical records system, christened HealthAngel went 'live'! HealthAngel would enhance hospital operations and be integrated into the national healthcare network.

2019

We were the first private hospital to partner Community Chest to raise awareness and rally support for the Rare Disease Fund.

We announced our partnership with Icon Cancer Centre to build a new integrated cancer facility at the hospital premises, offering services like haematology and radiation oncology.

Our partnership with Prudential allowed patients to enjoy the convenience of cashless medical service.

A new wing was added to St Francis Ward with two sets of two-bedders and four-bedders, bringing our bed count to 304.

We began construction of a new maternity and paediatrics centre. The centre would be ready in 2022/2023.

2020

Together as one Mount Alvernia Hospital family, we battle the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

On 3 November 2020, we hosted the groundbreaking ceremony for the Integrated Oncology Services Centre (IOSC), a partnership between Icon Cancer Centre and Mount Alvernia Hospital, which is due to open in 2022.



2021

We celebrate our 60th Anniversary with a series of virtual events and live events with safe distancing measures put in place.

A new dental clinic with wheelchair friendly features and catering to Persons with Special Needs opens at Enabling Village.

Inspired by its precision, reduced complications, and faster recovery for patients, we branched into robotic-assisted surgery using the da Vinci System.



2022

We are 61 years young! Here's to more years of 'Serving All with Love'!

Congratulations to Our Sponsorship Recipients!

At Mount Alvernia Hospital, we truly value our staff by investing in their career path with not only on-the-job coaching, training opportunities, etc but also sponsoring their academic progression.



These sponsorships range from short courses to longer ones in programmes such as:

- Healthcare Management and Leadership
- Marketing
- Midwifery
- Endoscopy
- Nursing
- Clinical Education and so on

Do join us in congratulating our colleagues from CQII, Retail Pharmacy, Business Office, Front Office, Security, Delivery Suite, Endoscopy Centre, ICU, OT and Wards!

Want to be awarded a Mount Alvernia Hospital sponsorship? Here are the eligibility criteria:

Nurses

Employees applying for sponsorship of Certificate, Higher/Advanced Certificates, Advanced/Specialist Diplomas or Diploma programmes must meet the following criteria:

1. Be a full-time confirmed employee;
2. Display aptitude towards learning
3. Possess the necessary attributes and academic strength to successfully complete the programme.
4. Programme must be offered by a recognised institution and relevant to the Division/Department's directions and needs; and
5. Nursing programmes must be accredited by the Singapore Nursing Board.

Non-Nurses

Employees applying for sponsorship of Postgraduate Diploma, Bachelor/Masters Degrees or PhD/Pharm D programmes must meet the following criteria:

1. Full-time confirmed employee with at least two years of service at the time of application;
2. Attained at least 'Meets Expectations' grading in the last two consecutive years' annual performance appraisal exercise.
3. Display aptitude towards learning;
4. Possess the necessary attributes and academic strength to successfully complete the programme;
5. Programme must be offered by a recognised institution/university and relevant to the Division/Department's directions and needs; and
6. Nursing programmes must be accredited by the Singapore Nursing Board.

Notes:

1. For Postgraduate Diploma, Bachelor/Masters Degrees or PhD/Pharm D programmes, all sponsorship applications will be reviewed by Director of HR and final approval sought from CEO.
2. All applicants will need to be interviewed to assess suitability.
3. Additional criteria may be drawn up if appropriate.

SHQSA Winners

We were awarded 2 gold and 89 silver this year at the annual SHQSA awards.

Congratulations to our staff who won this award. You have done us proud!



2 GOLD

89 SILVER



I would like to congratulate you for winning the SHQSA 2022 award. Thank you for your dedication and quality care. May you continue to Serve all with Love.

Dr James Lam Kian Ming, CEO



An Angel to the Elderly

Though it was her love for her grandfather that inspired her to train to be a nurse, it was her desire to care for the sick that made Senior Staff Nurse (SSN) Thiviya to stay on.



There are countless lives I am still waiting to touch and change in my journey ahead

Thiviya

A granddaddy's girl from young, SSN Thiviya has the patriarch to thank for sparking her interest in nursing. "Growing up, I was very close to my grandfather, but as his health deteriorated due to old age, he returned to India to recuperate. Despite being miles apart, we kept in contact through visits and frequent phone calls. Watching him suffer from a distance and not being able to take care of him personally really saddened me," shared Thiviya.

Thus, the idea of choosing nursing as a career intensified. "I wanted to acquire skills that would help me look after him whenever I was able to visit him in India." This deep-felt wish of a filial granddaughter would go on to have ripple effects as Thiviya dedicated her life to nursing, particularly in caring for the elderly.

Since her grandfather's passing, she has transferred her compassion to her elderly patients. "I take extra care and interest in them as they remind me of my beloved grandfather. To me, it feels as if I'm looking after him all over again. As such, I also developed a keen interest in Geriatric Nursing and took on an Advanced Diploma in Gerontological Nursing," shares Thiviya.

Although she knows that being a nurse is not easy and caring for patients comes with challenges, she has learned one lesson throughout her years: "I have learnt that communication is key as it helps earn my patients' trust and thus bond with each of them."

Thus, she feels that connecting with the elderly and earning their trust are some of the most essential skills required. "I made a conscious effort to not only know their underlying conditions well, but also to engage and understand them on a personal level. So, I am able to build a stronger rapport and better care for each patient."

The work may be tough but at the end of each day, Thiviya counts every smile and word of appreciation from her patients as her greatest motivation to do better and affirm her decision to be a nurse.

"I am Thiviya, one of the many dedicated nurses who 'Serve all With Love' at Mount Alvernia Hospital. I have been a nurse here for 8 years and am also a preceptor. There are countless lives I am still waiting to touch and change in my journey ahead."

Achieving Her Nursing Dream with Team Work

When the going gets tough, Senior Staff Nurse (SSN) Zhu Jing knows she can always count on her Mount Alvernia family to spur her on.

"I encountered numerous challenges that came with the job. There were times when I even felt like giving up," admitted SSN Zhu Jing candidly.

However, several things keep her going on this admittedly tough journey. One of them was a patient who completely changed Zhu Jing's mind about throwing in the towel. An end-stage cancer patient, this lady opened up her heart to Zhu Jing. "She shared about her life, thoughts and fears of being a cancer patient. We forged a deep bond through these conversations where she was so vulnerable to a stranger."

Through these frequent conversations, Zhu Jing was reminded once again of the importance of nursing. It made her re-evaluate her priorities in life, particularly her deep wish to help people.

"I have always wanted to help people through difficult times and to 'Serve all With Love'. As a nurse, apart from taking care of patients' needs, I am also able to give them emotional support when needed."

This dream started from her childhood, and Zhu Jing credits both her grandparents for inspiring her. Zhu Jing, who was born and grew up in China, was particularly close to her grandfather and fondly recalls the carefree days when he would pick her up from kindergarten. When he fell ill, Zhu Jing felt helpless watching him suffer. To make matters worse, he developed bed sores as the hospital system in China at that time did not provide bedside care. Zhu Jing



I want to encourage more people to embark on this journey and pursue a career in nursing

Zhu Jing

observed how her grandmother rose to the occasion and provided grandpa with meticulous bedside care, thus alleviating his misery. "With that, the idea of being a nurse stuck with me," explained Zhu Jing.

Despite that, Zhu Jing admitted to doubting her ability to serve well before she became a nurse. But having her Mount Alvernia family behind her has given her confidence. "Now, I have developed a resilience and will strive to do my best in serving all patients with the utmost love and care. Through difficult times, I am certain that we will eventually overcome the challenges as a team," says the determined nurse. After all, healthcare is an industry where one does not work alone; it is with the help of her supportive colleagues who continually motivate and encourage her to do better.

"I am Zhu Jing, a nurse in St Clare ward at Mount Alvernia Hospital. I want to encourage more people to embark on this journey and pursue a career in nursing. There may be limits to one's abilities, but I believe that we will be able to bring about more changes and improve the healthcare system with the help of more nurses."



Brightening Up Their Lives

Thanks to the Smiles for Good (SFG) project, recipients are not just flashing gorgeous new smiles, they are also enjoying better nutrition and health.

Started in 2018, SFG is a meaningful collaboration between the Mount Alvernia Hospital Community Outreach Team and Caritas Singapore. It aims to change the life of the needy, one smile at a time.

How the programme works:

Candidates are referred to the SFG programme by various social service organisations. Caritas helps to engage the candidates who are referred to the team by various sources, to understand their social circumstances and determine the suitability of the programme for them. Our Mount Alvernia Hospital Outreach team then manages the appointments between the candidates and dentists, and in some cases, even arranges transport for those with mobility issues.



How it helps the beneficiaries:

SFG provides them with free dentures which, more than just brightening up their smiles, is also beneficial to improving their nutrition and health. Unless you have lost your teeth or suffer from chronic dental issues, you may not realise that those who do often suffer from malnutrition. This is partly due to their more restricted dietary choices. In addition, they are often unable to chew their food properly and the food is not broken down well enough, causing the body to have a tougher time extracting, and absorbing, the nutrients. More worryingly, bad oral health is also a cause of heart issues.

With these new dentures fitted by the SFG team, wearers can now chew their food more thoroughly and will not face the sticky issue of having food being stuck in open gaps in their mouths.

Challenges faced:

As some beneficiaries are rough sleepers, they do not have a fixed home address or may not have a

mobile phone (or use pre-paid cards that have run out of credit). Getting in touch with them can prove very tricky.

Some of the elderly beneficiaries face additional obstacles due to their other health conditions. Their illness or even hospitalisation may stand in the way of their dental treatment plans, so these may prolong the process. To help overcome such issues, the Community Outreach team has even arranged transport for those with mobility issues. Pre-denture works are done at our Mount Alvernia Outreach Dental Clinic at Agape Village (MAODC); the denture fabrication works are then done either at MAODC or at the dental clinics of our kind volunteer dentists.

Despite all the challenges, it is indeed very satisfying to see the bright new smiles of our beneficiaries. Although COVID-19 interrupted the programme in

2020 and 2021, "SFG has progressed well beyond our first batch of beneficiaries," reports Manager Clara Teo with satisfaction about their 18 successful cases to date. They are currently helping their seventh batch of beneficiaries. "We remain confident that we will continue to create many more beautiful and confident smiles in the months and years to come."



We remain confident that we will continue to create many more beautiful and confident smiles in the months and years to come.

For more information about SFG, please contact outreachclinic@mtalvernia.sg.



Mr Tan Hok Lee

Mr Omar Bin Mat Sham

Mdm Leong Mei Chan

Mr Lau Kuan Kiam



Flu Vaccination Exercise

Held in Yishun, our Community Outreach team partnered with Nam Hong Welfare Service Society to hold a flu vaccination drive in February 2022.

Our Director of Nursing, Ms Shirley Tay, joined the team at the venue to support the nurse volunteers while Director of Clinical Services, Dr Djoni Huang helmed the consultation for the seniors. There was also a sharing on proper diet and nutrition by our senior dietitian, Ms Tan Shi Ling.

Over 100 flu jabs were administered during the vaccination drive



To ensure that the vaccination exercise went smoothly, the staff and volunteers from Nam Hong Welfare Service Society assisted in pre-event recruitment and registration of seniors, logistics and ushering, amongst other tasks.

Over 100 flu jabs were administered during the vaccination drive.

Watch this space as our Outreach Team will be conducting more flu vaccination exercises for different groups in the months to come.

Medical Examination for Our Footballers at the Special Olympics Unified Cup 2022

We are proud to have been a small part in the journey of athletes from the Special Olympics (SO) Singapore. We provided pro-bono medical examination for four male football athletes participating in the Special Olympics Unified Cup 2022 which will be held in the city of Detroit, Michigan (USA) from 28th July - 7th August 2022.



Special Olympics is a global sports & social movement that changes the lives of people with intellectual disabilities through the transformative power of sports.

Held in March 2022 at our Outreach Medical Clinic in Enabling Village, the medical examination included tests on kidney and abdominal tenderness, neck and back mobility, and heart rhythm, amongst many others.

We wish the team the very best for the Special Olympics Unified Cup 2022!

In addition, in line with our endeavour to improve health and wellbeing for the underserved and marginalised community, we are partnering with the Singapore Association for the Deaf and Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped on programmes for persons with disabilities and special needs. Do look out for us!

The Friso #ReallyKnowPoop Constipation Survey



Friso launched a survey targeted at 1,000 Singaporean parents to dig deeper on their toddlers' toilet habits. Here's what we found:

1 in 2 toddlers experience constipation



1 in 5 every few days



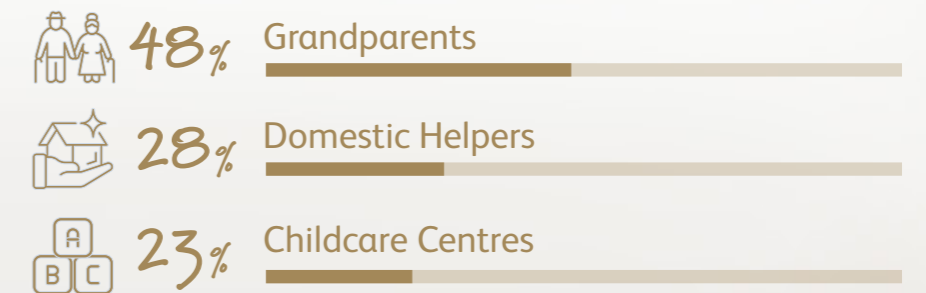
2 in 5 every few weeks

Parents are confident

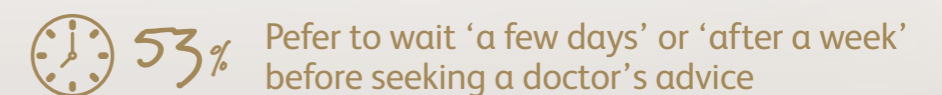


9 in 10 are 'confident' or 'very confident' in identifying toddler constipation

But they rely heavily on others



They prefer to wait and see



Tips to #ReallyKnowPoop

- The key to successful constipation management is early intervention and holistic care.
- Keeping healthy with exercise and a good night's rest can aid your child's digestion.
- Think you really know poop? Scan the QR code to boost your confidence in identifying good vs. bad poop!



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