Headline: Raising minimum legal age for smoking: Making it harder for youth to light up

Prof Chia Kee Seng, Dean, Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health, commented on how youth are more susceptible to nicotine dependency and supported the move to raise the minimum legal age for smoking from 18 to 21. The Health Ministry outlined several reasons for taking this step, including the fact that regular tobacco use is usually established between 18 and 20 years of age.

Source: Straits Times, page A8
Date: Friday, 10 March 2017
Coverage: Local, SSHSPH
Tone: Neutral
| **Headline:** | **Legal age for smoking to be raised to 21**  
Prof Chia Kee Seng, Dean, Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health, gave examples of studies where youths who do not pick up smoking before the age of 21 are unlikely to pick up the smoking habit at all. MOH announced that the legal age for smoking and buying tobacco products in Singapore will be raised from 18 to 21. |
| **Source:** | Channel 5, Channel NewsAsia (Singapore Tonight) |
| **Date:** | Thursday 09 March 2017, 9.00pm (Channel 5)  
Thursday 09 March 2017, 10.00pm (CNA) |
| **Coverage:** | Local, SSHSPH |
| **Tone:** | Neutral |
shrinking. He speculated that the Government was trying to transform Singapore into a medical hub for rich people from other countries.

Links:

a. All Singapore Stuff Facebook (72 comments)
b. The Straits Times Facebook (21 comments)
c. Channel NewsAsia Facebook (20 comments)
d. Yahoo! News Singapore (12 comments)
e. Yahoo Singapore Facebook (4 comments)

19) Grooming more community care nurses (ST, pA8)

With healthcare shifting away from acute hospitals and into people's homes, the Ministry of Health (MOH) is looking for ways to get nurses to follow suit. Currently, only 4,900 of Singapore's 34,000 or so practising nurses are in the community care sector. MOH plans to add 900 more by 2020. "If we want to go beyond healthcare to health, we need nurses to deliver preventive health in the community," said Senior Minister of State for Health Amy Khor during the debate on the ministry's Budget yesterday.

Similar report:

a. More training for nurses to improve basic and community care skills (ZB, p10)

20) Making the switch, relishing the challenges (ST, pA8)

Ms Ong Shu Fen decided to make the switch to community nursing 2 1/2 years ago, after two years of working in a hospital ward. Her current role requires her to think on her feet and be a lot more independent, challenges that she relishes. "The learning curve is very steep; your skills must be very good and you need to know a lot," said the 28-year-old senior staff nurse. "In the hospital... you have the help of speciality nurses, but you don't have that in people's homes."

21) Minimum legal age for smoking to be raised to 21 (ST, pA1)

To deter young people from taking their first puff, the minimum legal age for smoking will be bumped up from 18 to 21. The legislative changes will be proposed in Parliament within a year, and phased over a few years.

Similar reports:

a. Making it harder for youth to light up (ST, pA8)
b. Legal smoking age to be raised to 21 (TDY, p1, 6)
c. Legal age for smoking to be raised to 21 (TNP, p1)
d. Minimum legal age for smoking and purchase of cigarettes raised to 21 (ZB, p1)
e. Minimum Legal Age to buy cigarettes raised to 21 (SM, p6)
f. Banning those below 21 from buying cigarettes (WB, p1, 4)
g. Proposal to increase the minimum age of smoking to 21 years (BH, p5)
h. Legal age for smoking to be raised to 21 (CNA TV News)
i. Legal age for smoking to be raised to 21 (Ch5 TV News)
j. Legal age for smoking to be raised to 21 (Ch8 TV News)

22) Online: Proposal to raise legal smoking age to 21 drew varied reactions
Various channels reported on the proposed law to raise the legal smoking age from 18 to 21 as announced by SMS (MOH) Dr Amy Khor during the MOH Committee of Supply (COS) debate.
Many expressed approval towards raising the legal smoking age from 18 to 21 and suggested that smoking be banned altogether. A few held that, aside from contributing to cleaner air, the move would prevent the youth from picking up the habit. One suggested that smokers apply for a license to smoke, while another proposed that fines be imposed to compensate for the revenues lost in banning smoking among people aged below 21.
In contrast, many also disfavoured the measure and observed that the Government deemed a person below 21 too young to smoke but saw the same as old enough to be enlisted in the NSF and carry firearms, be tried as an adult in courts, be married, engage in sex and have children, drive and vote. A few sarcastically commented that the Government viewed smoking as more risky to the youth than porn, online betting and casinos. A few others insisted that it was their right to smoke, and those who smoked claimed to be in better health than non-smokers. A few added that vehicular emissions contributed more to air pollution than smoking.
A few expressed scepticism of the effectiveness of such a ban, as youths would simply request others to purchase cigarettes for them or that some sellers would operate underground. A few opined that the Government was lagging in terms of law enforcement, as youths would still buy cigarettes and smoke without being caught. Another expressed doubt that cigarette sellers could demand proof of age from cigarette buyers.
A few suggested either a ban or raising the age for drinking as well, considering it to go hand in hand with smoking. A few were in favour of letting smokers pay higher premiums for insurance schemes such as MediShield Life.

Links:

a. Channel NewsAsia Facebook [1] [2] (440 comments)
b. The Straits Times Facebook (261 comments)
c. TODAY Facebook (136 comments)
d. All Singapore Stuff Facebook (110 comments)
e. Yahoo Singapore Facebook (106 comments)
f. HardwareZone Forum (74 comments)
23) **Parents, counsellors laud move** *(TDY, p6)*

The move to raise the legal age for smoking to 21 has drawn cheers from counsellors and parents worried about their teens being influenced to pick up the habit. But tobacco retailers also pointed to some practical problems that may arise, such as whether licensed over-the-counter cigarette sellers will now have to be above a certain age.

24) **She was sacrificing food for cigarettes to feed habit** *(TDY, p6)*

Her first cigarette was given to her when she was 14 or 15 years old. From smoking socially, Ms Chrystine Wong established a regular habit by 16. She smoked two to three sticks a day, and would get her friends to buy the cigarettes — which was “the only way to get them” — or share a pack with them.

25) **Healthcare counsellor considers elderly like her own parents** *(BH, p4)*

Ms Nurhashimah Mohamed Ramli is one of the counsellors at the Community Health Centre (CHC) under the National Health Group (NHG). Healthcare counsellors are tasked to contact and reach out to the elderly - which aims to help residents at risk of getting diabetes to manage their health through regular visits and by changing their lifestyle. The programme is supported by the People’s Association.

26) **From the Gallery: Health is wealth, and so are the arts** *(ST, pB8)*

ST described the discourse at Parliament yesterday. It noted Minister’s speech emphasising on the need to keep Singaporeans healthy in mind and body, and noted the three Rs that Minister spoke of in Parliament, being Refraining from unhealthy food, Reducing the amount of such food one eats and Replacing them with healthier alternatives. It also highlighted the rising rate of dementia, noting that a new measure will empower members of the local communities such as GPs to detect the disease early.

27) **Out of the box** *(ST, pB6)*

A wide range of issues, from mental health to pop culture, was raised by MPs yesterday, the last day of the Budget debate. Of note to MOH, the paper highlighted MP Tin Pei Ling calling for a creation of a database for senior citizens with dementia so that the community can better identify and help them. It also noted MP Christopher De Souza who called for MOH to sponsor an academy that focused on the training and professional development of allied health workers so as to help them keep up with medical advancements and share best practices.

28) **An added touch of harmony** *(ZB, p13)*

ZB’s Nam Yunzhou shared his thoughts on the past 8 days of parliamentary budget debate sessions and noted that there is more harmony in this year’s Budget debate. He added that MOH's enhanced efforts to bring healthcare into the community, and