Building upon more than 60 years of experience in research, training and practice in epidemiology and public health, the Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health (SSHSPH), National University of Singapore, was established in October 2011 as Singapore’s first and only full-fledged national public health tertiary education institution. The School is also a member of the National University Health System.

The School aims to continually foster healthier communities in Singapore and the region, and impact public health programmes and policies through its robust educational programmes and translational cross-disciplinary research work on cohort studies and life course epidemiology, infectious disease research, health technology assessments, health promotion, workplace safety and health, health systems evaluation and health services research. An interdisciplinary approach, augmented by rigorous training, applicable research and regional partnerships, places SSHSPH at the forefront of public health knowledge discovery and practice in Asia.

The School actively collaborates with many partners including the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Karolinska Institute, Harvard School of Public Health and University of Michigan School of Public Health. Its flagship programme, the Master of Public Health degree, attracts students from a wide range of disciplines from within Singapore and throughout the region.

Mission

Turning Discovery into Healthier Communities

Vision 2020

The School will be recognised for integrating knowledge across disciplines to develop solutions that will improve the health of populations in Singapore and beyond.

Values

Altruism
Innovation
Mentorship
This year marks the first leadership transition at the Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health, as I take over the reins from founding dean, Professor Chia Kee Seng, whom I have had great respect for since I joined the School in 2010.

Perhaps unbeknownst to many, 2018 also marks the 70th anniversary of public health academia in Singapore; the Department of Social Medicine and Public Health—the predecessor of the School—was founded in 1948. Indeed, public health in Singapore has come a very long way since then. Over the years, needs and challenges have evolved, and yet our academic community has always remained a steadfast presence to research, translate, and implement strategies and solutions to tackle many of these challenges.

From managing outbreaks of Zika and multidrug-resistant tuberculosis, to understanding the increasing burden of chronic diseases and rising healthcare costs, to forecasting future healthcare manpower needs and evaluating the cost-effectiveness of national programmes, translational research has become second nature to colleagues within the School.

The School’s range of expertise has also expanded considerably, from the traditional strengths in Occupational Health and Safety, Epidemiology, Biostatistics, and Health Promotion, to today’s emerging peaks of excellence in Modelling, Health Economics, Health Communications, Infectious Disease Epidemiology, and Health Systems and Health Services Research. The School has similarly ventured into the areas of Artificial Intelligence and Data Science, with these domains promising revolutionary breakthroughs in disease prevention, screening and management.

Alongside a new deanery team, I see our collective strengths and the tremendous possibilities that lie within our reach, thanks to the many achievements the School has accomplished under Kee Seng’s sterling leadership and the hard work of all colleagues. However, the work for the School is far from complete and I know the challenge ahead is a big one for all of us. Given the rapidly changing public health landscape, there will naturally be questions about what the School’s strategy will be going forward.
We have transformed from a small department to Singapore’s national school of public health with the influence and reach to impact national policies and programmatic decisions. The School now recruits the highest-quality students from Singapore and the region, and graduates the very best public health professionals. Our 104 faculty members (full-time, joint primary and secondary, and adjunct) collectively form an active, high-impact research enterprise and vibrant intellectual community, and we have a level of staff support that allows both faculty and students to thrive. With the School’s capacity at present, it has become increasingly critical for us to not only continue consolidating our national presence, but also to fulfill the School’s mandate in global health by reaching out internationally to improve the health of many beyond Singapore.

To this end, the School has established the Global Health Planning Office in the Leadership Institute for Global Health Transformation (LIGHT), under the leadership of its director, Associate Professor Sri Chander. Chander brings to LIGHT and the School his leadership, wisdom and humility—gathered from close to three decades of extensive experience leading global health missions and development in Asia Pacific—as we expand our presence in the region.

To determine the School’s priorities in its global health mission, a panel of public health leaders and policymakers from nine Asian countries were invited for a one-day retreat in November 2017 to identify existing and emerging public health priorities in Southeast Asia. Mapping against the School’s capabilities, we identified four areas of need to focus on in the first phase of our external outreach:

i. Healthcare priority setting, through health economics and health technology assessment;

ii. Infectious diseases, focusing on vaccination and antimicrobial resistance;

iii. Occupational health and safety; and

iv. Hospital management and administration.

In addition, the School is also setting up the Health Intervention and Policy Evaluation Research (HIPER) Centre, comprising faculty members, public health practitioners and researchers in the areas of health economics, health policy, health technology assessment and programme evaluation. With a specific focus on implementation and evaluation, HIPER will serve as the engine to measure the relevance and effectiveness of national policies, programmes and interventions. Besides working with national agencies, HIPER will also work with other governments in Asia to help shape their respective public health agendas.

The School could only come this far because of the 70-year-strong foundation laid by each and every forerunner who came before us. As the saying goes, “The road to success is always under construction”. Together with my deanery team, I pledge to continue building on this foundation as we bring the School to greater levels of global health influence and leadership in Asia.

Nothing worthwhile is ever achieved alone, and central to any endeavour’s success is always the participation and support of the community. On that note, I ask for your full support for the School as we chart our course for the next lap in global health impact and excellence.
Senior Management

Professor Teo Yik Ying
Dean

Professor Rob Martinus van Dam
Vice Dean (Academic Affairs)
Domain Leader, Epidemiology

Associate Professor Jeannette Lee Jen Mai
Vice Dean (Education)

Associate Professor Alex Richard Cook
Vice Dean (Research)
Domain Leader, Biostatistics and Modelling

Associate Professor Sri Chander s/o Tikamdas Nebhraj
Director, Leadership Institute for Global Health Transformation

Associate Professor Gerald Koh Choon Huat
Domain Leader, Health Systems and Behavioural Sciences
Programme Leader, Tele-Health Innovations Research

Associate Professor Hsu Li Yang
Programme Leader, Infectious Diseases

Associate Professor Mikael Hartman
Programme Leader, Breast Cancer Prevention
Faculty Members

Emeritus Professor
Lee Hin Peng

Professors
Chia Kee Seng
David Koh Soo Quee
Ong Choon Nam
Saw Seang Mei

Associate Professors
Chia Sin Eng
Choi Hyungwon
Helena Legido-Quigley
Luo Nan
Adeline Seow Ling Hui
Tae Bee Choo
Norbert Ludwig Wagner
Wong Mee Lian
Jason Yap Chin Huat

Assistant Professors
Miho Asano
Cynthia Chen Huijun
Mark Chen I-Cheng
Mary Chong Faong Fang
Marnin Feng Mengling
Lee Jeong Kyu
Falk Mueller-Reimenschneider
Rick Ong Twee Hee

Senior Lecturers
Vincent Pang Junxiong
Seow Wei Jie
October Sessions
Sim Xueling
Clarence Tam
Tan Chuen Seng
Kavita Venkataraman
Wee Hwee Lin
Yi Huo

Lecturers
Liow Chee Hsiang
Judy Sing Gek Khim

Instructors
Julian Azfar
Suganthi Narayanasamy

Other Faculty Members
Audrey Chia Wai Yin
Joint Associate Professor
Erie Andrew Finkelstein
Joint Professor
Fong Ngan Phoon
Adjunct Associate Professor
Satkunanantham S/o Kandiah
Joint Professor
Koh Woon Puay
Joint Professor
Lim Su Chi
Research Associate Professor
Lim Yee Wei
Joint Associate Professor
Ooi Eng Fong
Joint Professor
Adraan Roellin
Joint Associate Professor
Tai E Shiyong
Joint Professor
Tan Lai Yang
Joint Senior Lecturer
Tan Say Beng
Joint Associate Professor
Wong Tien Yin
Joint Professor

Fresh Faces

Dr Brent Joseph Gibbons

Brent was appointed the Deputy Director of the Centre for Health Services and Policy Research on 27 November 2017, and assumed the role of Acting Director of the Centre on 15 June 2018. In this position, Brent works closely with various research collaborators, including National University Health System (NUHS) clinicians, researchers and government agencies to further strengthen and expand the quality and vitality of the Centre’s research efforts.

He is currently leading an evaluation of the NUHS Value Driven Outcomes programme and has begun work to survey health technology assessment-related price intervention strategies in Asia, among other projects. He also provides internal consultancy services and training to the NUHS community and mentors Research Fellows, Research Associates and Research Assistants in Health Policy, Health Economics and Health Services Research.

Brent received his PhD in Public Policy from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, US. Prior to joining the School, he was a Research Leader at IBM Watson Health — Evaluation and Economics Research in Bethesda, Maryland. His research in US largely focused on mental health and substance use disorders in relation to insurance coverage and systems of care, federal and state policy reforms, and how social determinants such as employment impact mental wellbeing. In Singapore, he expanded his research focus to include broad healthcare reform evaluations, health technology assessments, and national and regional policy analysis.

In his spare time, Brent enjoys travelling, good coffee and just about any kind of music.
**Dr Cynthia Chen Huijun**

Cynthia started her career as a Research Assistant at SSHSPH. She was subsequently awarded the NUS-Overseas Postdoctoral Fellowship to complete her postdoctoral training at the University of Southern California (USC) Schaeffer Center for Health Policy and Economics. At USC, Cynthia worked on research projects in the economics of ageing and her projects were supported by prominent charities in US such as the MacArthur Foundation and Hartford Foundation.

She is also involved in multiple grants in Singapore and US including the National Institute on Ageing. She plans to continue developing her economics of ageing research and develop models for Singapore and Asia. She will continue to explore health outcomes, healthcare utilisation and expenditures, and evaluate the likely impact of policies.

Cynthia’s hobbies include running, hiking, skiing, scuba diving with big fishes, and most outdoor sports. She also likes to explore nature, where she marvels at the immensity of creation.

**Dr Huso Yi**

“I completed my undergraduate studies in Psychology and Philosophy in South Korea before moving to the United States, where I studied Anthropology in a postgraduate programme at the University of Amsterdam and completed my PhD in Health Studies/Applied Psychology at New York University. In my dissertation, I investigated HIV epidemic fatigue in a community with high HIV prevalence in New York City.

After completing my PhD coursework and predoctoral clinical internship, I worked as a Senior Research Associate at a research institute funded by the National Institutes of Health for a number of international interdisciplinary public health projects.

Before joining NUS, I worked as an Assistant Professor in public health at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) and Director of Research at the CUHK Centre for Bioethics. My research focuses on ethnographic epidemiology in vulnerable and marginalised populations, community-based participatory research (CBPR), mixed-methods research, health disparities and inequalities, and public health ethics. I have taught topics of interdisciplinary research methods (qualitative and mixed methods), CBPR, health psychology, global health and public health ethics. As a ‘barefoot’ social epidemiologist, I like to explore new ideas. To quote American philosopher and educator Susanne Langer, “If we would have new knowledge, we must get us a whole world of new questions.”

Besides academic work, I enjoy cooking (for my wife) and walking my dog. In my spare time, I love to watch documentaries and storytelling movies (with a glass of wine), and explore art scenes around the area. These really allow me to appreciate my work, family and neighbourhood more. I am a regular classical and jazz concertgoer, and have already fallen in love with the Victoria and Esplanade Halls. I am very much looking forward to meeting more people from all generations and communities in Singapore and enjoying conversations with them.”
Dr Jeff Hwang Yi-Fu

Jeff is an Occupational Physician who has been around in NUS for a number of years, having completed his medical studies and Master of Public Health here. He was also with SSHSPH for his residency training before formally joining the School in January 2018.

His interest is in Workplace Safety and Health Services and he is now working with colleagues under the School’s Educator Track. His hobbies include football (of which he watches more than he plays nowadays), listening to music, and cooking (he only just started to learn the art of cooking simple Chinese dishes).

Mr Julian Azfar

Julian joined the school on 18 June 2018 as an Instructor (Educator Track), supporting the teaching and development of the Minor in Public Health programme. He obtained his Bachelor’s degree in Geography and Master’s degree in Southeast Asian Studies from NUS, and a Postgraduate Diploma in Education (with Distinction) from Nanyang Technological University.

Julian began his career as a high school Humanities teacher and later moved on to teach in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme in an international school. He has a keen interest in educational policies and practices, particularly in education for citizenship, internationalism and social justice, and he adopts a humanistic-behavioural approach in his educational research. Prior to joining SSHSPH, Julian has held teaching appointments at the Department of Southeast Asian Studies in NUS, and most recently at the Centre for English Language Communication, where he taught Critical Thinking and Writing modules at both the Faculty of Engineering and in the NUS University Town residential colleges.

Fun facts about Julian: He is well-trained in a number of languages, having read Higher Chinese since primary school, Japanese language at the O Levels, and Bahasa Indonesia during his undergraduate days. He is also a qualified group fitness educator trained in Singapore and Australia, and has volunteered in leading large-scale fitness events for charity organisations such as the Breast Cancer Foundation.

Dr Liow Chee Hsiang

Chee Hsiang joined the School as a Senior Lecturer (Educator Track) on 13 November 2017. He obtained his Bachelor of Medicine from the University of Newcastle in Australia, and his Master of Medicine (Public Health) from NUS.

Chee Hsiang is familiar with the NUS culture and campus from when he was an Adjunct Senior Lecturer with SSHSPH. In 2002, he joined Bless China International, a non-governmental organisation (NGO), where he led a team to bring about sustainable local leadership within the organisation, and oversaw the operation of multiple projects across different geographic sites in Yunnan Province, China. For over a decade, Chee Hsiang had designed and was the main trainer for the Design, Monitoring and Evaluation Training Curriculum to expatriates and local staff from various foreign NGOs and MPH students from Kunming Medical College in Yunnan. He had also collaborated with China’s national and prefectural Centres for Disease Control and Prevention in several HIV research projects, and was involved in cross-border HIV work in the Greater Mekong Region. Much of Chee Hsiang’s work dealt with programme evaluation, operations research and leadership development. He also has extensive experience in teaching, lecturing and curriculum development. Chee Hsiang took up an adjunct faculty position upon returning from China, coordinating modules as well as delivering guest lectures for undergraduate and postgraduate Global Health modules and the medical curriculum.

Chee Hsiang’s hobbies include playing the piano (from Rachmaninoff to jazz fusion), music composition, and playing board games with his sons. They usually play chess, but their current favourite is ‘Pandemic’ (merging global health work with fun!).

Julian (top row, 2nd from left) with students from the College of Alice and Peter Tan residential college, whom he taught the writing module ‘Exploring Changing Tourist Destinations’
Dr October Sessions

October joined the School on 1 July 2018 as an Assistant Professor (Tenure Track). He obtained his Bachelor of Science in Biology from the University of Arkansas, and his PhD in Molecular Genetics and Microbiology from Duke University.

October is familiar with the NUS culture and campus from when he was Postdoctoral Fellow and Research Assistant Professor at the Duke–NUS Medical School.

October has a particular interest in the mechanisms that define the pathogenic potential of flaviviruses. His research frequently utilises high-throughput sequencing and more traditional molecular genetics and microbiological techniques to elucidate these mechanisms. These tools readily translate to the mechanistic analysis of other pathogens as well. In collaboration with local and international clinical partners, he is applying these tools to study the emergence of novel and known pathogens with novel clinical manifestations and associations.

October enjoys hiking with his family, with their most recent hike at the Rocky Mountains in Colorado, US.

Dr Wee Hwee Lin

Hwee Lin loves her job as an academic as it gives her autonomy in choosing her research questions, and the opportunity to be rejuvenated by the youthful energy of new students every academic year. She chose academia as a career because she was inspired by a quote from philosopher and educator Dr Daisaku Ikeda, “For what purpose should one cultivate wisdom? May you always ask yourselves this question!”

Hwee Lin’s research straddles pharmacy and public health. Hence, a joint appointment with SSHSPH and the NUS Faculty of Science’s Department of Pharmacy was the best arrangement that could happen to her. It gives Hwee Lin great joy to know that her research findings have led to the implementation of the first ever pharmacist-led medication review in a family medicine clinic locally. The research findings are now used to inform the design of a national programme for pharmacist-led medication reviews in the community setting.

Outside of work, Hwee Lin is a mother to three energy-zapping kids aged 5 to 12 years. She is also a lucky wife of a man who loves to cook. Aside from nagging her kids to do their homework, Hwee Lin usually spends quality time with her family through cycling, swimming and baking.
Spotlight

Antimicrobial Resistance: From Knowledge to Action

SSSHSPH re-designated as WHO Collaborating Centre for Occupational Health

Health Legacy for the Future

Breast Cancer Meanings Symposium and Fundraising Dinner

NUS–MIT–NUHS Healthcare AI Datathon and Expo
Antimicrobial Resistance: From Knowledge to Action

At the School’s Public Health Thought Leadership Dialogue (PHTLD) on 1 November 2017, guest-of-honour Dr Lam Pin Min, Senior Minister of State for Health and Transport, announced the National Strategic Action Plan against Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR).

“The extreme scenario of AMR, of having no effective antibiotics to treat infections, will bring us to a post-antibiotic era where simple infections may kill. Even today, there exist infections that do not respond to many treatment options. We must therefore take action now,” said Dr Lam.

The 7th instalment of the School’s PHTLD series, ‘Antimicrobial Resistance: From Knowledge to Action’ featured Professor Keiji Fukuda, Director, School of Public Health, The University of Hong Kong.

Prof Fukuda stressed that the fight against AMR is not just limited within the areas of science and medicine. Instead, the problem requires a whole-of-society approach, including focus on policy-driven research, raising awareness in food consumers, and innovating sustainable agricultural and veterinary practices in the use of antimicrobial drugs.

Following Prof Fukuda’s talk was a panel discussion moderated by Associate Professor Hsu Li Yang, who leads the School’s Infectious Diseases Programme. The other panellists were Professor Patricia Conway, Visiting Professor, Nanyang Technological University; Associate Professor Vernon Lee, Director, Communicable Diseases Division, Ministry of Health; and Associate Professor Helena Legido-Quigley from SSHSPH.

The panellists had a stimulating discussion on a range of topics associated with battling AMR. These included the probability of using other compounds for the prevention and treatment of diseases, the feasibility of reducing antibiotic use in farming, the current status of rapid diagnostics development to differentiate infectious disease and thus strength of antimicrobial drugs needed, changing public behaviour towards antimicrobial drugs, and ways to regulate the profit-driven distribution of such drugs. The panel also addressed questions from the audience, which included local and regional public health experts and policymakers.

Following the dialogue, Professor David Heymann, professor of Infectious Disease Epidemiology, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, chaired a closed-door session where Prof Fukuda, academics, representatives from the Ministry of Health and invited speakers discussed the issues related to AMR and possible solutions to tackling the problem.

Leadership Institute for Global Health Transformation (LIGHT)

Director: Associate Professor Sri Chander

LIGHT was launched in 2016 under the leadership of Emeritus Professor Lee Hin Peng, with the aim of addressing global health issues that are relevant to Singapore and the School’s regional partners. The institute serves as a platform to facilitate and focus all global health expertise and resources of the School, including the training of global health leaders both locally and regionally, to effectively address and ameliorate the region’s most pressing health issues.

Through its flagship programme, the PHTLD series, LIGHT facilitates discussions with high-profile global health leaders as well as experts from different research disciplines to generate solutions to global health challenges. LIGHT also publishes Global Health White Papers to inform policymakers in the region about global health issues and solutions.

Associate Professor Sri Chander was appointed the Director of LIGHT on 1 January 2018 to oversee the functions of LIGHT and grow the School’s reputation as a channel to use and address public health issues in the region. A/Prof Chander has a wealth of experience working on global health issues; for nearly 30 years, he led a regional team to provide technical support to World Vision offices in 17 countries across the Asia-Pacific region from his Singapore home base.

In January 2018, a Global Health Planning Office was established under LIGHT to provide leadership in regional and global health, and serve as an engine to coordinate and drive global health activities in the School.
Health Legacy for the Future

Held on 2 November 2017, the ‘Singapore Chinese Health Study: A Legacy for the Future’ symposium honoured and paid tribute to founding investigator Dr Mimi Yu with the School’s inaugural SSHSPH Distinguished Service Award, in recognition of her immense contributions in setting up and managing the study.

One of the largest based in Asia, the Singapore Chinese Health Study (SCHS) has provided significant findings in diverse areas such as cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal diseases and nutrition.

Initiated more than two decades ago, the SCHS — currently helmed by Professor Koh Woon Puay from SSHSPH and Duke-NUS Medical School as Principal Investigator — saw the recruitment of 63,275 middle-aged and senior Chinese men and women between April 1993 and December 1998.

Kicking off the symposium, Prof Koh shared that a total of 222 research papers resulting from the cohort study have been published or accepted for publication. Addressing the applicability of the study to other races, she said that the findings “will benefit all Singaporeans regardless of ethnicity, as many of the risk and protective factors of disease are not modified by genetic differences among the different races”.

The awards ceremony was followed by a dialogue session with the study’s co-founders, Dr Yu and Emeritus Professor of Public Health Lee Hin Peng.

Invited researchers and speakers also presented their respective research findings using SCHS data. They include Professor Jian-Min Yuan, Professor of Epidemiology at the University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute in US (cancer), Professor Rob van Dam, SSHSPH Epidemiology Domain Leader (cardiovascular disease), Professor Pan An, Assistant Dean of Tongji Medical College’s School of Public Health, Huazhong University of Science and Technology in China (type 2 diabetes), and Assistant Professor Teng Gim Gee, Department of Medicine, NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (musculoskeletal diseases). Prof Koh concluded the session with her sharing on the topic of ageing as well as the future work of SCHS.

The event was attended by some 100 NUS faculty and researchers from overseas.

Breast Cancer Meanings Symposium and Fundraising Dinner

The ‘Breast Cancer Meanings’ Symposium and Fundraising Gala Dinner held on 16 March 2018 marked the completion of the first phase of a research and intervention programme on Asian breast cancers. The three-phase programme is the first Pan-Asian anthropology work for breast cancer led by Singaporeans across eight countries to scientifically address a disease of epidemic proportion.

Findings from Phase One, which focused on better understanding Asian women’s health-seeking behaviours towards breast cancer, were shared at the Symposium as well as in the book titled ‘Breast Cancer Meanings: Journeys across Asia’. Contributing authors of the book flew in from around the world to present their research at the symposium.
The book was unveiled at the Fundraising Gala Dinner and presented to the evening’s Guest of Honour, Madam Halimah Yacob, President of the Republic of Singapore. The dinner was held in support of the NUS Asian Breast Cancer Research Fund and all funds raised went towards supporting the next two phases of the programme.

Seated 1st from left: Professor Downing Thomas, Associate Provost and Dean, International Programs, University of Iowa, Dr Martin Platt, A/Prof Hartman and Clinical Associate Professor Philip Iau, NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, with the speakers and organisers of the Breast Cancer Meanings Symposium.

In March 2018, BCPP was awarded the NUHS–UGM Collaboration Grant to start up a parallel Breast Cancer Cohort in Indonesia with A/Prof Hartman as the research mentor. The cohort comprises three participating institutions: Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) Yogyakarta, Universitas Andalas Padang and Rumah Sakit Kander Dharmais Jakarta. The next month, the team flew to Iowa to initiate a new collaboration with the University of Iowa in a cross-disciplinary project of medical science, anthropology and public health promotion.

A/Profs Hartman and Wong Mee Lian at the University of Iowa

A/Prof Hartman (5th from right) and Ms Jenny Liu, BCPP Project Manager (6th from right) together with the institute representatives of the NUHS–UGM Collaboration Grant.

Breast Cancer Prevention Programme
Programme Leader: Associate Professor Mikael Hartman

The Breast Cancer Prevention Programme (BCPP) centres on the prevention of breast cancer through aetiological and genetic understanding of the disease. BCPP aims to decrease breast cancer mortality rates without increasing the burden of breast cancer to the healthcare system.

The programme works with two large multi-ethnic cohorts to study risk factors for Asian breast cancer: the Singapore Breast Cancer Cohort and the Singapore–Malaysia Hospital-based Breast Cancer Registry. The Singapore Breast Cancer Cohort is a member of an international multidisciplinary consortium, the Breast Cancer Association Consortium, and has successfully recruited over 10,000 participants.
SSHSPH re-designated as WHO Collaborating Centre for Occupational Health

The NUS Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health has been re-designated as a World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre for Occupational Health for a period of four years, effective 22 June 2018 to 22 June 2022, under the leadership of Associate Professors Norbert Wagner and Chia Sin Eng.

As a WHO Collaborating Centre (WHOCC), the School will support WHO in expanding occupational health services through capacity building, providing occupational health laboratory services and training, and offering technical and policy assistance to middle- and low-income countries.

With funding from Temasek Foundation International (TFI), and in collaboration with the Health Environment Management Agency (HEMA), Ministry of Health of Viet Nam, the School embarked on the TFI-NUS-Viet Nam project, a three-year public health programme in Viet Nam comprising several capacity building courses in occupational health, Total Workplace Safety and Health (Total WSH) and public health leadership.

The first course was conducted on 9-12 October 2017 in Ha Long, Quang Ninh, Viet Nam. The ‘Basic Course in Total WSH for Healthcare Facilities’ was organised and taught by A/Prof Chia, A/Prof Wagner, Dr Jeff Hwang and Ms Vivian Ng.

Subsequently, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed on 6 May 2018 between SSHSPH and HEMA to mark the official launch of the Public Health Programme in Viet Nam.

Following the MOU signing, two more courses were organised. The first was an advanced course in Total WSH conducted by A/Prof Wagner on 7-8 May as a follow-up to the basic course conducted in October 2017. Participants from hospital administrations across Viet Nam presented the general prevention and health promotion programmes at their workplaces, which they had planned and implemented after the first course in October.

The second was a basic course in Occupational Health conducted by Drs Jeff Hwang and Bernard Thio on 7-9 May, with participants mainly from occupational health units under the Ministry of Health of Viet Nam.

WHOCC for Occupational Health since 14 October 1992

SSHSPH is one of over 800 institutions in over 80 countries worldwide working together with WHO in areas such as occupational health, communicable diseases, nursing, nutrition, mental health, health technologies and chronic diseases.

Promoting Total WSH on home ground

Together with the NUS University Health Clinic and Office of Campus Security, the School piloted a chronic disease management programme for the security officers on campus. While still pending formal evaluation, the 12-month-long programme that started in August 2017 has received positive feedback that health outcomes have improved among the participants, including smoking status, weight and lifestyle behaviours.

The MOU was signed by Prof Teo Yik Ying, Dean, in absentia and A/Prof Nguyen Thi Lien Huong, Director General, HEMA.

Pictured: Prof Chia Kee Seng (representing Prof Teo) and A/Prof Nguyen holding the MOU.

Behind them are witnesses A/Prof Do Van Dung, A/Prof Nguyen Van San, A/Prof Luong Mai Anh, Deputy Director General, HEMA (MMed OM ‘01), and Mr Stanley Lee, Senior Director (Programmes and Partnerships), TFI.

Prof Chia presenting A/Prof Nguyen with a memento on behalf of the School. The calligraphy scroll is a replica of the memento presented to the School’s benefactor, Prof Saw Swee Hock, when the School was officially established in 2011.

The phrase ‘人人健康’ means ‘a healthy population’ underlying the School’s commitment to turning discovery into healthier communities. When read in the opposite direction, ‘康健人人’ means ‘building a healthy population’ to similarly demonstrate how everyone plays a role in public health.
NUS–MIT–NUHS Healthcare AI Datathon and Expo

A new artificial intelligence (AI) platform that uses deep learning technologies will soon be able to harness the vast amounts of data available in hospitals for better healthcare delivery.

The innovative ‘DISCOVERY AI’ platform was launched on 6 July 2018 at the NUS–MIT–NUHS Healthcare AI Datathon and Expo, jointly organised by NUS, the National University Health System (NUHS), AI Singapore and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Other smart tools and new technology to tackle challenges in healthcare, such as facial recognition and AI, were similarly showcased at the expo.

Using hospital data, DISCOVERY AI can perform tasks, including the diagnosis of appendicitis in those with complaints of stomach pain, and even predict the risk of readmission in patients who have been hospitalised for various medical conditions. The platform is currently undergoing clinical trials and is expected to be deployed in phases across NUHS institutions in the coming years.

Assistant Professor ‘Mornin’ Feng Mengling, who helped develop DISCOVERY AI, is also conducting research on an AI tool that can suss out abnormalities in mammograms. If rolled out, he said, the tool could improve the productivity of radiologists fourfold. “The tool reduces the time that radiologists have to spend looking at a mammogram and may also point out something that they missed before,” said Dr Feng.

Another highlight of the event was the AI Datathon on 6–8 July that saw some 200 healthcare professionals, tech experts, data scientists and computer engineers from Singapore, Thailand, Japan, Korea, Australia and US, competing as 20 cross-disciplinary teams in a gruelling 48-hour data-crunching and brainstorming exercise to develop artificial intelligence and smart tools specifically for healthcare.
CONGRATULATIONS, CLASS OF 2018!

It was a momentous day for the Class of 2018 as they crossed a significant milestone at the SSHSPH Commencement Ceremony on 14 July.

Held at the University Cultural Centre, 47 Master of Public Health (MPH), Master of Science (MSc) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) graduates received their degrees from Presiding Officer Mr Chan Sek Keong, NUS Pro-Chancellor. The ceremony was jointly hosted by the Faculty of Dentistry with participation from the School of Design and Environment.

Guest of Honour, Mr Chan Heng Kee, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health, addressed the graduates, congratulating them on their achievements and thanking their families for their support throughout the graduates’ course of study.

After the awarding of degrees, MPH Class Valedictorian Dr Gabriel Chia shared about the importance of grit and persistence, and commended the graduates’ efforts and success in completing their MPH, MSc and PhD courses. Speaking about today’s public health challenges, he said, “I remain convinced that as we move on from this hall, we will overcome these challenges with passionate persistence and improve the health and wellbeing of our community.”

To end his speech, he quoted founding Prime Minister Mr Lee Kuan Yew, “To the young and to the not-so-old, I say, look at that horizon, follow that rainbow, go ride it,” and urged his fellow graduates to follow that rainbow with passionate persistence and never give up.

CELEBRATING STUDENTS, GRADUATES AND ALUMNI

The night before the SSHSPH Commencement Ceremony saw alumni, students and faculty come together at the SSHSPH AlumNite 2018 to celebrate the achievements of the graduating class.

Professor Teo Yik Ying, Dean, welcomed the guests and addressed the graduates, congratulating them on completing their studies and also encouraging them to never falter in their public health mission as they embark on a new chapter in their public health journey.

To recognize the outstanding academic accomplishments of the students, Prof Teo and Associate Professor Jeanette Lee, Vice Dean (Education), awarded the prize recipients of the Dean’s List, Tye Cho Yook Gold Medal, Occupational and Environmental Health Society Medal, Richard Gillis Prize, Dean’s Medal and Prize, Graduate Student Research Awards, and Wang Gungwu Medal and Prize.

The School also invited alumnus Dr Gan Wee Hoe (MPH ’11), Director of the Occupational and Environmental Medicine Unit, Division of Medicine, Singapore General Hospital, to share his personal public health experience and journey.

After dinner, guests participated in a special segment called ‘Show, Don’t Tell’, where they picked an activity that could foster interaction and bonding between alumni and students, and acted it out in a photo challenge. The panel of judges—comprising A/Prof Lee, Dr Gan and Student Life Director Dr Raymond Lim—voted on the best photo based on creativity, teamwork and relevance to the proposed activity.

It was an evening filled with lively conversations, rekindled and newly forged friendships, and happiness and laughter all around.
**GRADUATE EDUCATION**

**Master of Public Health**

Programme Director: Associate Professor Jeannette Lee

The Master of Public Health (MPH) programme seeks to provide a rigorous and interdisciplinary approach to learning, with emphasis on finding evidence-based and innovative solutions to Asia’s current and future public health challenges. Graduates of the MPH programme are equipped to address both traditional and emerging public health issues, and many of them assume leadership and administrative positions in diverse public health disciplines and work in a wide variety of local and international settings.

Ms Jasmine Lee (MPH ’18) is a diagnostic radiographer and an advocate for the allied health profession. Her hopes of shaping policies concerning radiographers led her to study the Master of Public Health at the School.

Jasmine won a Merit Award at the RadiologyAsia Conference held on 11–13 May 2018. She delivered an outstanding poster presentation summarising results from her MPH practicum on ‘Attrition among radiographers in Singapore: An exploratory qualitative study’. Her poster was shortlisted out of 99 entries and was among the five Merit Award winners.

Jasmine is a Class Ambassador (AY2017/2018) and graduated with her MPH degree at the SSHSPH Commencement Ceremony in July.

Mr Pang Long (MPH ’20) attended a one-week workshop organised by the World Health Organization (WHO) in December 2017 and also did a one-month internship with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), China from 4 December to 5 January 2018.

After taking the ‘Contemporary Global Health Issues’ module by A/Prof Sri Chander, I learnt that WHO’s current key global health priority is Universal Health Coverage (UHC), and major donors like the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation also play influential roles in shaping the global health landscape and direction. This inspired me to join these organisations to gain more insight about what they do and how they function.

In December 2017, I was selected as the delegate of China to attend the WHO UHC Day Negotiation and Simulation Workshop in Beijing, China. 30 delegates representing 10 countries in the Western Pacific Region were guided by WHO experts to delve into health system research and health policy negotiation through the lens of UHC. Exposed to the working environment and challenges, we managed to deliver a joint resolution draft on UHC for the region. Through sharing, I learnt about the health system, health needs and policy direction of each country, together with the difficulties and constraints they face. Of course, I also made a lot of international friends who shared the same passion in global health.

Following the workshop, I joined the Health Innovation & Partnership team at the BMGF Beijing office as a graduate intern. Leveraging on my knowledge of UHC gained from the MPH modules as well as the WHO workshop, I supported the literature review and data collection for an invited manuscript by the Lancet that focused on China’s information and communication technology prowess to help African countries solve issues in achieving UHC.

Working on another project about evidence-based decision-making in immunisation strategies in China, I could see that China is making great effort and progress on vaccination programmes, and the BMGF is very resourceful in terms of expertise and network to support the local government, especially for polio vaccination. I am overwhelmed and amazed by the variety and scope of work the BMGF is involved in.

It has been an invaluable learning journey for me to work with brilliant people from WHO and BMGF, and to gain hands-on experience in current global health practices. I highly recommend all MPH students to consider an overseas field practice and explore the many opportunities out there to broaden the horizons for an enriching MPH learning experience.
Ms Joey Ng Hwee San, Mr Tan Yongqiang and Ms Zhang Yiwen (MPH ’19) did an internship with World Vision India (WVI) from 26 February to 10 March 2018. During these two weeks, they were involved in the final evaluation of Phase II of the Arubah Health Project in terms of measuring impact and sustainability of two schemes: Advocacy Communication and Social Mobilisation, which mobilises local political commitment to provide resources to empower communities and people affected by tuberculosis (TB), as well as the Treatment Adherence Scheme, which provides support counselling to promote adherence to TB treatment through a network of volunteers and provision of high-quality medication.

Our two-week field practice with World Vision India to evaluate a TB control programme in Hyderabad was definitely one of the highlights of our MPH course at SSHSPH. We were welcomed with warm hospitality and put to work very quickly, planning and preparing materials for data collection in the field, as well as making logistical arrangements. There were many learning opportunities for us as we interacted with senior WVI staff, and observed team dynamics and leadership in action in driving the evaluation process towards our deliverables: a summary of our evaluation findings and next step recommendations.

Through it all, we had the chance to apply what we had learnt from our lectures to problems in a real-world setting, with the thoughtful guidance and support from our hosts. It was a cross-cultural challenge to gather evidence and conduct interviews in a foreign environment, but we gleaned many valuable insights from observing the way our WVI hosts patiently and respectfully engaged with the programme beneficiaries and stakeholders.

We would like to thank A/Prof Sri Chander for the opportunity to go on this field trip as well as the advice and assistance he provided along the way, Dr Anita Victor, Organisational Mentor, and all World Vision India staff involved in making this a memorable and fruitful learning journey for us.

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Yongqiang, Yiwen and Joey (3rd to 5th from left) at the closing ceremony, with members of the WVI evaluation and project team, as well as distinguished guests from the community.

Graduate Research Programmes

Programme Director: Associate Professor Luo Nan

The Master of Science (MSc) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programmes at SSHSPH are research-intensive programmes that emphasise both mastery of research skills and acquisition of domain knowledge. Students will complete coursework and conduct independent research under the supervision of a faculty member, leading up to the submission of a thesis demonstrating their scholarship and original contributions to the knowledge in their research fields.

The School’s research degrees in public health provide graduates with opportunities in the healthcare sector, biomedical and pharmaceutical industries, research institutes, government agencies and academia.

Ms Avril Soh Zixin, 4th year PhD student:
I had the opportunity to do an internship at Abbott Nutrition Research & Development Asia-Pacific Center from October 2017 to April 2018. It was an enriching experience where I could apply my skills in epidemiology to support research and development in the industry setting. Some of my tasks during the internship included supporting the commercial and marketing departments on the science behind the company’s oral nutritional supplements, and working with them to develop messaging materials and promotional activities that are backed by strong scientific evidence. I was also involved in the development of product claims, which included conducting extensive literature review and assessing the totality of evidence to support these claims. In addition, I also evaluated literature on the health impact of specific nutrients to ensure that the science supporting product formulations is up-to-date with current literature.

These experiences have further reinforced the epidemiological and research skills that I have developed through my PhD studies, and the application of these skills and knowledge into practice has also helped me to grow and mature as a researcher. I hope my fellow schoolmates will also have the opportunity for such stimulating experiences beyond the classroom.

Avril (bottom right) and her team conducting recruitment for a clinical trial.

On the last day of her internship, Avril’s colleagues surprised her with a personalised photo collage of her time at Abbott Singapore.
Ms Elaine Ho Qiao Ying went to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia for an internship with the health unit of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) from September to December 2017. She graduated with her Master of Science degree at the SSHSPh Commencement Ceremony in July 2018.

I am very fortunate to have been accepted for this internship at UNHCR. During my stint, I learnt how to conduct needs assessment interviews with refugees to assist them with their health needs. To get a better sense of the concerns faced, I initiated a series of focus group discussions with refugees in the community on issues relating to mental health and psychosocial support, with the aim of informing future initiatives.

Through this experience, I gained a better understanding of the complexities of health issues faced by refugees living in an urban setting. I am sincerely grateful for this opportunity and would encourage anyone interested to take a leap and explore!

Other learning opportunities came in the form of conducting health education sessions with refugee children in the school, which was an enjoyable experience. A group of us designed and led presentations on topics such as hand hygiene, food preparation, healthy eating, exercise, managing stress and road safety.

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As doctors, it is our duty to provide treatment. But I am not wholly satisfied with this. Instead of treating them as patients, why not empower them and prevent them from becoming patients in the first place? This passion for prevention practice grew stronger each day during my houseman year, and it was with this goal that I began my journey in Public Health.

My interest in Public Health was piqued when I was just starting out in medical school. I was intrigued by the value of prevention that I had witnessed through the many community health projects and case studies. I was particularly impacted by one patient during a case study follow-up. He had terminal liver cancer and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Having picked up smoking and drinking during his adolescence, he shared with me how much he regretted not taking better care of his health so he could witness his daughter’s wedding.

Ms Loo Miyang, 4th year PhD student, was accepted for a part-time internship at Kantar Health, Singapore from November 2017 to January 2018. During this period, she worked part-time for them for up to 16 hours per week.

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Preventive Medicine Residency Programme

Programme Director: Associate Professor Jason Yap

The Preventive Medicine Residency Programme is offered by the National University Health System (NUHS), combining the previous Public Health and Occupational Medicine training programmes in Singapore.

Graduates from this programme go on to contribute locally and internationally in diverse roles in national health policy, management of healthcare services and preventive medicine clinical services.

In the past year, the residency has been substantially restructured to a portfolio-based, self-directed programme, to develop independent specialists for the challenges of Singapore’s ageing population, increase in chronic diseases, rising healthcare costs and complex healthcare reform.

UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

Medical Curriculum

The School continues to support the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (YLLSOM) in training medical undergraduates. The curriculum offered by the School aims to equip medical undergraduates with public health skills that are important in clinical practice, including critical appraisal of medical research as well as prevention and control of diseases with national public health significance.

The training culminates in the Community Health Project, where, guided by the School’s faculty, medical students participate in research that facilitates their achievement of key public health competencies. Students gain first-hand experience in applying principles of scientific integrity, research ethics, effective teamwork and project management.

Ivan Polunin Medal

Dr Ivan Low Jinrong received the Ivan Polunin Medal for achieving the best overall performance in epidemiology and public health throughout the medical course, and for demonstrating considerable involvement and leadership in service to the community and research in public health. Ivan graduated at the YLLSOM Commencement Ceremony in July 2018.

“I am humbled to receive this award on behalf of my fellow physicians who are doing great work in the community, in the face of an evolving public health landscape.” — Ivan

Minor in Public Health

The School offers a Minor in Public Health to all non-medical undergraduates in NUS. With an offering of 15 modules taught by SSHSPH faculty, the Minor introduces the translational aspects of public health and the need for a cross-disciplinary and team-based approach in tackling public health issues. It also lays the foundation for future training in carrying out public health and clinical research, and offers students a chance to work with public health organisations.

Since its launch in 2013 with 33 students, the Minor in Public Health has grown to be the second most subscribed minor in NUS, with 294 students enrolled in AY2017/2018.

Brandon Ng Shi Yuan, Year 4 Life Sciences major
Office for Healthcare Transformation, Ministry of Health

Having always wanted to better understand the healthcare sector outside the classroom, I enrolled myself in the SPH3201 Public Health in Practice module during the summer vacation. I was given the opportunity to do an internship at the Ministry of Health Office for Healthcare Transformation (MOHT), a corporatised agency that was recently set up to shape the future of healthcare in Singapore.

During my eight-week stint at MOHT, I worked together with nine other interns to lay the foundations for the Healthy Campus Initiative. We conducted ethnographic research on the food and physical landscapes of Nanyang Technological University and the National University of Singapore, and generated insights based on our findings for oral and written presentations to various stakeholders. Our supervisors provided us with adequate training in the areas of ethnographic research, design thinking and change management to enable us to perform our assigned task independently and effectively. They also provided us with various opportunities to gain a deeper understanding of Singapore’s healthcare system. These came in the form of a field trip to the National Centre for Infectious Diseases, as well as networking sessions with government officials from different statutory boards.

In all, I am better able to appreciate the multidisciplinary nature of the work and skillsets required for a career in the healthcare sector, which would prove useful as I prepare for my transition into the working world in my final year of study at NUS.

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Vanessa Lim Wei Ling, Year 4 Life Sciences major
Public Health Translation Team (PHTT), NUS SSHSPH

I was fortunate to be accepted into the SSHSPH Public Health Translation Team under A/Prof Jason Yap and manager Ms Yang Qian. PHTT specialises in providing dedicated translational expertise for its stakeholders to better inform policy decisions. I was tasked with various projects such as to evaluate physical activity interventions for elderly in Singapore and abroad, and to investigate the gaps in Singapore’s healthcare social services. During the process, I had the privilege to interview various healthcare organisations such as the NUHS Jurong Health Campus and Tsao Foundation, allowing me to gain invaluable first-hand knowledge in the public health sector. The internship has also allowed me to go out of my comfort zone and delve into things never attempted such as building an application prototype for healthcare financial services. Through PHTT, I am able to look at public health issues with fresh eyes and better understand what the public health industry is like. Overall, this internship experience has been an extremely useful and unforgettable one.

Tan Soon Guan, Year 3 Life Sciences major
Health Shared Services, GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) Asia House

My summer internship at GSK was both rewarding and wonderful. My short attachment in the Health Shared Services department allowed me to understand how organisations can contribute to the health of employees through various workplace health promotion strategies. I was fortunate to be part of a supportive team who valued my suggestions and contributions, and who spent time to mentor me and help me understand the importance of our work in the context of population and public health. I am grateful for this platform that SSHSPH has given me and I encourage fellow students to take this opportunity offered by the School to explore possible career options in public health.

Miguel Joshua Tan Kai-Chen, Year 3 Life Sciences major
Regional Medical Affairs, Sanofi Pasteur

My internship at Sanofi allowed me to understand the relevance of pharmaceutical companies in the healthcare sector and provided me with the opportunity to gain invaluable, practical and cross-functional skills. During my stint under Sanofi Pasteur’s Regional Medical Affairs team, I learned that the intersection between public and private healthcare serves as an organised, systematic system, and that commercial interests within the public health sphere and health consumer behaviour influence the purchases of pharmaceutical products.

As a Life Sciences major pursuing a Minor in Public Health, my understanding of the biological concept behind vaccines and knowledge of public health allowed me to apply what I learnt in school to real-world problems, as well as take a more active role during discussions with my diverse and talented colleagues. Looking back, this internship was indeed invaluable in providing me with the opportunity to gain industry-specific experience and hone the soft skills necessary for multidisciplinary work in the healthcare sector.

Vanessa (front row, 1st from left) with A/Prof Yap (1st from left), Ms Yang (front row, 1st from right) and Ms Jacinta Chen, Senior Manager under Dean’s Office (1st from right)

Soon Guan (middle) with fellow interns from various other departments in GSK Asia House

Miguel (middle) with his fellow interns at Sanofi, Vishara Prakash (Year 3 NUS Chemical Engineering student) and Ang Xian (Year 4 Business Management student in Singapore Management University)
**DOMAINS**

**Biostatistics and Modelling**  
*Domain Leader: Associate Professor Alex Cook*

The Biostatistics and Modelling domain (BSMD) has broad interests across public health, healthcare analytics and modelling, collaborating extensively with partners from the National University Health System (NUHS), hospitals from other regional health systems, the Ministry of Health, National Environment Agency, and other overseas partners.

The domain’s work involves developing and applying sophisticated statistical methodologies in clinical epidemiology, genetics and proteomics. Faculty and researchers are experts in clinical trial design and analyses, and undertake spatial and burden modelling of chronic diseases such as diabetes, as well as infectious diseases such as dengue. In addition, they develop methods for mining large epidemiological and omics datasets to understand the aetiology of complex diseases in humans, and work on cutting-edge artificial intelligence methods for healthcare data.

In August 2017, two BSMD faculty members won competitive research funding as principal investigators: A/Prof Cook as the Core PI for the Singapore Population Health Improvement Centre (SPHERIC)’s population health analytics core—a collaboration between SSHSPH and NUHS regional health system planning office—and Dr Sim Xueling, who was awarded a National Medical Research Council grant to identify DNA methylation biomarkers associated with longitudinal weight change.

**Epidemiology**  
*Domain Leader: Professor Rob van Dam*

The Epidemiology domain provides insights into the frequency and distribution of diseases in populations and its determinants, contributing to the identification of appropriate targets for public health interventions and evaluation of health promotion initiatives.

Its research strengths are in molecular, nutritional and translational epidemiology, with a focus on pertinent health issues prevalent in society, such as breast cancer, obesity, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, eye diseases and infectious diseases.

The domain also leads several large-scale cohort studies that translate to public health interventions. These include the Singapore Chinese Health Study, Multi-Ethnic Cohort Study and Diabetic Cohort Study. In addition, faculty members also actively conduct epidemiological modules in the School’s undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

Assistant Professor Vincent Pang, Ready for Action

It was midnight on the fourth day of our training when my team was still energetically debating the revised definitions of the cases related to the scenario’s outbreak, as more epidemiological and laboratory data had been gathered during the day. There were eight of us—three epidemiologists from Philippines, Germany and Singapore; two clinicians from Pakistan and the United Kingdom; one veterinarian from Nigeria; one infection control prevention nurse from Australia; and one laboratory specialist from Iran—and we were chasing every second that crawled towards 8am, when we had to present our findings and official report to the stakeholders.

The atmosphere in the room was mostly intense due to the numerous tasks that we had to complete within a short period of time. Nevertheless, there were also many joyous moments when we gathered to chat over a snack or meal. The team synergy was surprisingly strong even though we had only known each other for less than a day before starting the scenario with our excellent facilitators and role-players.

I am privileged to be one of the 24 participants who attended the outbreak scenario-based training on 1–7 October 2017 in Philippines, organised by the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN) with the support of the World Health Organization (WHO) and WHO Western Pacific Regional Office. The objective of the training workshop was to build vital soft skills in future GOARN deployees, particularly focused on the importance of teamwork, appreciation of cultural and personality differences, and effective communication when dealing with global outbreaks.

During this time, I was given the opportunity to network with other GOARN partners, as well as appreciate the important role that GOARN plays, the challenges it faces, and the constant engagement and commitment of GOARN partners to help countries in need to tackle outbreaks.

The one-week training programme also provided me with a unique experience that allowed me to explore the technical, operational and logistical challenges of a coordinated response to an outbreak of unknown origin. The training was conducted in a highly realistic field setting, with a scenario-based simulation exercise that took place in various locations, including Manila and a field location outside the capital city. It was an intensive training, and the days were long as the team professionally unravelled the sources and aetiology of the outbreak over the five-day period.

I look forward to future deployments and would highly recommend individuals who are adventurous and passionate about contributing to global outbreaks to apply for this rigorous and meaningful training.
Health Systems and Behavioural Sciences
Programme Leader: Associate Professor Gerald Koh
Deputy Domain Leader, Health Systems sub-domain: Associate Professor Luo Nan
Deputy Domain Leader, Health Behavioural Science sub-domain: Associate Professor Wong Mee Lian

The Health Systems and Behavioural Sciences (HSBS) domain focuses on health services, health systems, health economics and health promotion. The domain examines the whole continuum of healthcare in Singapore, from primary care to the regional health systems in Singapore, supporting the national aim to integrate healthcare across all levels and sites, and to provide patient-centred, cost-effective and affordable healthcare. HSBS also leads cross-disciplinary studies in collaboration with multiple agencies to support nationwide initiatives.

The domain’s health promotion arm looks at the interactions between lifestyle behaviours and the physical and sociocultural environment to prevent non-communicable and communicable diseases. It also focuses on research and training in the design, implementation and evaluation of behavioural change and health promotion interventions, which contributes to the development and implementation of policies to promote health.

For health economics, a relatively new discipline within the School, the domain develops and leads health policy modelling and simulation for Singapore, establishing the School as a regional leader in the areas of health technology assessment and behavioural economics.

Programme Leader: Associate Professor Hsu Li Yang

Infectious Diseases (ID)
Programme Leader: Associate Professor Falk Mueller-Riemenschneider

The ID programme aims to improve the understanding of infectious diseases in Singapore and the region, and to mitigate the impact of ID by conducting rigorous research that can be translated into public health policies and practices. The programme, previously called the Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) programme, was officially reformed on 1 April 2018 to cover the broader range of infectious disease issues.

The AMR arm of the programme focuses on the public health aspects of the problem and aims to build supporting infrastructure and frameworks for future collaborative research in AMR, particularly with regard to surveillance and health systems.

In April 2017, the programme successfully obtained a National Medical Research Council Centre Grant, and was also awarded the Antibiotics Awareness Fund. A/Prof Hsu is also a member of the AMR Project Team that is mapping out the National Action Plan against AMR.

Physical Activity and Nutrition Determinants in Asia (PANDA)
Programme Leaders: Assistant Professor Falk Mueller-Riemenschneider
Professor Rob van Dam

The PANDA programme aims to improve physical activity and nutrition behaviours in the urban Asian setting by better understanding the interplay between individuals and their environment, and the use of mobile technology to continually monitor lifestyle behaviours and their determinants. Insights from this research will be used to develop and implement novel interventions to prevent obesity and chronic diseases in the Singapore population.

As one of the School’s interdisciplinary research programmes, researchers in the PANDA programme come from different fields such as behavioural sciences, epidemiology, nutrition and physical activity assessment, and data analytics. PANDA comprises three interlinked research areas that build on each other:

1. Study of the physical, sociocultural, political and economic environmental factors that influence food choice and physical activity.
2. Evaluation of the interaction between individuals and their environment, and how it affects their diet and activity patterns in real life, using mobile technology and ecological momentary assessment methodology. The adaptation and scientific evaluation of assessment strategies for diet and physical activity is a part of this research area.
3. Development and evaluation of dynamically-tailored, real-time interventions in education and work settings. This includes the use of a combination of technology-based, real-time interventions and environmental changes.
Assistant Professor Rick Ong Twee Hee and Associate Professor Alex Cook provided quantitative support to an investigation of a multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) outbreak in an apartment block in Ang Mo Kio town. Whole-genome sequencing was used to confirm the relatedness of TB transmission between individuals residing in the block.

Dr Ong performed a molecular epidemiological analysis of isolates from the active cases, and A/Prof Cook analysed the number of latent cases identified through mass screening to determine the risk of secondary infections with MDR-TB. Their analysis—that has since been published in the International Journal of Infectious Diseases—determined through the phylogenies that the known cases were linked to a previous outbreak in a gaming centre, and that the ostensibly high prevalence rate of latent TB was consistent with what would be expected given the older age profile and lower socioeconomic status of residents in the block.

Based on the results generated for whole-genome sequencing, the Ministry of Health has approved a project to switch from the use of MIRU-VNTR and spoligotyping to whole-genome sequencing for TB universal molecular fingerprinting.
UHS–SPH Integrated Research Programme (USIRP)

Programme Leader: Associate Professor Hsu Li Yang

USIRP is a joint programme between SSHSPH and the University of Health Sciences (UHS), Cambodia. The programme was initially set up to focus on tuberculosis (TB) in Cambodia, specifically on how resources should be allocated for the control of TB. Subsequently, the programme expanded its activities to include other areas such as antimicrobial resistance (AMR), workplace safety and health, and diabetes mellitus.

The USIRP office is located in Phnom Penh and currently houses two research fellows from SSHSPH, one research fellow and one research assistant from UHS, and an administrator. The programme works closely with other Cambodian institutions and non-governmental organisations, including Cambodia’s National Center for Tuberculosis and Leprosy Control (CENAT) that houses the country’s National TB Control Program (NTP).

USIRP has completed several studies on TB including a discrete choice experiment study to determine the best incentive combination to increase volunteer health workers’ motivation in carrying out health duties. The programme is currently conducting spatiotemporal modelling of TB in Cambodia, where findings from in-depth spatial analyses of collected data are extrapolated to non-sampled parts of the country. The study combines the spatial analysis of TB prevalence with the evolving demographic characteristics in different parts of Cambodia to obtain reliable predictions of TB indicators for 2030 and 2050 at sub-national and national levels. These findings will assist the resource allocation by the NTP in Cambodia towards achieving the World Health Organization’s End TB Strategy targets.

COLLABORATION

Public Health Translational Team (PHTT)

Director: Associate Professor Jason Yap

The School continues to support the Ministry of Health (MOH) in generating evidence for policy deliberation. Established in 2016, the Public Health Translational Team provides dedicated translational expertise and carries out research to address specific policy issues and inform policy decision-making.

In the last year, the team completed several projects on various topics such as hospital waiting time, body mass index, and cost-effectiveness analyses of specific vaccinations and screening tools. PHTT also facilitated a series of studies in support of the War on Diabetes, including studies on risk factors for diabetes-related amputation, diabetes screening participation, behaviours of pre-diabetics, and factors for weight gain in early adulthood.

The School also provided inputs for policy deliberation and defined new areas of relevant research topics through various engagement platforms with MOH. The annual MOH–SPH Senior Management Symposium was held on 4 July 2018, where staff from both organisations presented and discussed research in the areas of modelling and simulation, infectious diseases and health technology assessment. A series of less formal engagements, focused on the respective topics of health services research, infectious diseases and non-communicable diseases, took place throughout the rest of the year. In addition, the team submitted a position paper with suggestions on proposed measures for standardised packaging and enlarged graphic health warnings for tobacco products.

PHTT also organised a study trip, comprising delegates from the Health Promotion Board and MOH, to Thailand’s Ministry of Public Health and Thai Health Promotion Foundation to learn about the preparatory work and events leading up to their government’s decision to implement tax on sugar-sweetened beverages.
Collaboration

Centre for Environmental and Occupational Health Research (CEOHR)

Director: Professor Ong Choon Nam
Deputy Director: Assistant Professor Seow Wei Jie

The Centre’s current research foci include the detection and control of environmental and occupational diseases, carcinogenesis and chemoprevention, oxidative stress and antioxidants, and metabolomics. CEOHR also conducts research on the identification of biomarkers for the School’s Environmental and Occupational Health Studies, especially on how lifestyle and diets affect chronic diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases.

CEOHR continues to collaborate with various government agencies and industries on environmental surveillance to examine the impact of haze and air quality that may affect Singapore and the region. In addition, the Centre has teamed up with other universities and institutions working on food securities to identify the beneficial effects of nutrients in local leafy vegetables.

The Centre also provides advice, consultancy and laboratory services to research institutions such as the World Health Organization. In the past year, the Centre has published six manuscripts related to biomarkers and environmental exposure.

Centre for Health Services and Policy Research (CHSPR)

Acting Director: Dr Brent Joseph Gibbons

Established in 2014 with continued support from the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine Fund, CHSPR produces high-quality, impactful research on the Singapore healthcare system and its underlying health policies, with staff expertise in health economics, programme evaluation, implementation science, survey design and analysis, various qualitative interview and analysis techniques, and mixed methods.

In the past year, CHSPR continued its work with the National University Health System (NUHS) on a comprehensive evaluation of regional health system (RHS) transformation initiatives. Results of this work helped shape current implementation efforts and will inform future RHS transformation strategies. CHSPR has also developed an evaluation plan for the Value Driven Outcomes (VDO) programme that began in 2016 at the National University Hospital. The evaluation by CHSPR will be executed in FY2018 and has important implications for healthcare nationwide, as other regional health systems and the Ministry of Health (MOH) push for VDO across Singapore.

CHSPR continues to work closely with clinicians to provide programme evaluation expertise, collaborate on health services research (HSR) grants and add economic evaluation components to studies. One example is the Centre’s collaboration with the National University Cancer Institute to build HSR capacity in its clinician-researchers by conducting an HSR workshop and providing research support to seed grant awardees. The Centre also collaborated on a Health Services Development Programme proposal that has been successfully funded and aims to improve the clinical effectiveness of the national scoliosis screening programme.

The Centre often works with national-level stakeholders, including the Agency for Integrated Care, Health Promotion Board and MOH. It actively contributes to national task forces and government committees, such as on elder shield reforms and the establishment of the Agency for Care Effectiveness. CHSPR has also extended its reach to the non-profit sector, such as in its work for the Tsao Foundation, for which it completed a programme evaluation of SCOPE, a self-care programme for older adults in the community. CHSPR also conducted HSR and Economic Evaluation workshops, including at conferences such as the Global Conference for Integrated Care.

CHSPR has grown in both size and expertise in the past year, increasing its production of internally generated research, in part by recruiting three research fellows with strong backgrounds in economics, policy analysis and qualitative methods. It is deeply active in critical research topics such as the high incidence of type 2 diabetes, and continues to raise its international profile through conference presentations and speaking engagements.
Centre for Infectious Disease Epidemiology and Research (CIDER)

Director: Assistant Professor Vincent Pang Junxiong

CIDER advocates the need for regional and global partnerships to strengthen biosurveillance systems to understand, prevent and mitigate the threats of infectious diseases. The Centre develops epidemiological capabilities for disease surveillance, consultation and research to deter and control potential infectious disease outbreaks, and to contribute extensively in the development of biodefence.

With the main objective of generating scientific evidence to inform national policies and strategies in order to foster healthier communities, the Centre aims to be a professional academic and research centre that can reduce the public health burden caused by infectious diseases locally and in Asia.

Dr Pang was appointed Director of CIDER on 1 June 2017, and the Centre has successfully secured additional funding from the Ministry of Defence for a period of three years, from 2017 to 2020. On 8 January 2018, Professor Teo Yik Ying, Dean, who served as the director from 2015 to 2017, was appointed as the new Co-Chairman of the CIDER Management Board.

One Health and Outbreak Surveillance Symposium 2018

One Health is an emerging platform that emphasises the interconnectedness of the health of people, animals and our shared environment. The One Health approach encourages disparate professionals across sectors to collaborate and tackle emerging infectious diseases through research, biosurveillance, detection and containment.

Held on 13 July 2018 at NUS University Town, the symposium brought together many local and international experts to share about their experiences and valuable learning points in implementing One Health projects in Singapore and the region. Invited speakers include a veterinarian, medical officer, public health officer, policymaker, computer scientist, geographer, virologist and epidemiologist.

The event was jointly organised by CIDER and the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA), in partnership with the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Health and National Environment Agency of Singapore.

The event’s guest of honour was RADM (Dr) Tang Kong Choong, Chief of Medical Corps of the Singapore Armed Forces. Over 300 participants and stakeholders were in attendance at the symposium and dialogue sessions.

Collaborative Solutions Targeting Antimicrobial Resistance Threats in Health Systems (CoSTAR-HS)

Centre Grant Leader: Associate Professor Hsu Li Yang

Under the National Medical Research Council’s Centre Grant Call, CoSTAR-HS was established in October 2016 to build up capacity, infrastructure and networking opportunities for antimicrobial resistance (AMR) research in Singapore. It is a partnership involving researchers and clinicians from the National University Health System (NUHS), Singapore General Hospital and Communicable Diseases Centre, with NUHS as the central administrative and corresponding site through the School.

The CoSTAR-HS AMR Research Grant (CoSTAR-HS ARG) encourages exploratory and developmental research by supporting projects in the early and conceptual stage. The grant is intended for innovative research projects that can develop and strengthen interinstitutional research collaboration and networks in Singapore, and for those that need to utilise the facility cores developed under CoSTAR-HS.

In November 2017, Assistant Professor Rick Ong Twee Hee was awarded the CoSTAR-HS ARG Seed Grant for his research project titled ‘Antimicrobial resistance surveillance using MinION sequencing’.

Collaboration Solutions Targeting Antimicrobial Resistance Threats in Health Systems (CoSTAR-HS)
News

Diabetes

Tobacco

Infectious Diseases

Myopia
In the News

**Smoking, banning point-of-sale display of tobacco products, banning smoking prohibition in public places, raising the minimum legal age of that combines taxation, control of tobacco sales and advertising,** Seng advocated using a thoughtfully calibrated, multipronged approach To tackle tobacco use in Singapore, Professors Teo Yik Ying and Chia Kee encourage Singaporeans to move towards a smoke-free nation, rather.

What more can be done to bring numbers down? How can we encourage Singaporeans to move towards a smoke-free nation, rather than compromising and settling for a smoke-lite nation?

To tackle tobacco use in Singapore, Professors Teo Yik Ying and Chia Kee Seng advocated using a thoughtfully calibrated, multispronged approach that combines taxation, control of tobacco sales and advertising, smoking prohibition in public places, raising the minimum legal age of smoking, banning point-of-sale display of tobacco products, banning alternative tobacco products, and public education.

**Diabetes**

“Environmental nudges may be subtle, but they are also ubiquitous and enable persistent modifications to our lifestyles. The food and beverage industry has been quick to capitalise on the covert role that psychologists, sociologists and marketing consultants play in influencing spending patterns. At the same time, urban planners and architects are beginning to realise the impact their designs have on human health. It is time that these multidisciplinary experts are properly recognised and reminded of their roles in encouraging health-seeking behaviours. After all, while physicians may hold the key to treating people with diabetes, the key to preventing diabetes in the first place may just lie with social scientists and architects.” — Professor Teo Yik Ying, Dean

Associate Professor Joanne Yoon and Professor Rob van Dam, together with the National University Hospital and medical technology firm Jana Care, developed a mobile application that helps track the weight and blood glucose levels of pregnant women with gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM). The app, HABITS-GDM, is customised to the local context and is the first app available in Singapore and the region to support the self-management of GDM.

In a recent study, Assistant Professor Kavita Venkataraman and her team found that periods of extreme blood sugar levels put diabetics at significantly higher risk of developing serious complications, and that the impact of high glucose levels in the body might be irreversible. Even if sugar levels improve later on, a duration of very high blood glucose level will still double to triple a patient’s likelihood of developing complications like heart attack and stroke, or even dying. It is not only important to control diabetes well, said Dr Venkataraman, but it is also important to control it well over time.

“We must change our mindset. Cultivate good habits for wealth and health in the first 30 years of life, pursue both wealth and health in the next 30 years, so we can enjoy wealth and health in the last 30 years.” — Professor Chia Kee Seng

**Tobacco**

While Singapore has made significant progress in smoking control, the proportion of smokers among Singaporeans has plateaued over the past 10 to 15 years, indicating a significant number of new smokers each year.

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**Myopia**

Singapore’s myopia rate has increased dramatically over the past few decades, especially among those who started primary school in the 1980s, after Singapore’s independence in 1965 and with the introduction of the new education system in 1979. These changes, together with intensive schooling, may have contributed to the increase in myopia prevalence, according to Professor Saw Seang Mei’s study that investigated the correlation between prevalence of myopia and the Singapore education system.

The study also showed that myopia prevalence rates in Singaporean children and youth have stabilised over the last decade. This may be due to more parents encouraging their children to form good reading habits, participate in outdoor activities and take more frequent breaks when studying. Government initiatives, elimination of the primary four streaming and the advocating of a holistic education not solely focused on academic excellence, may have also played a part.

**Infectious Diseases**

A study led by Associate Professor Alex Cook, Vice Dean (Research), examined Singaporeans’ perceptions towards public health interventions during an infectious disease outbreak to identify public acceptance of different outbreak response policies. The study found that when it comes to stopping a deadly infectious disease outbreak, like in the case of SARS, Singaporeans generally prefer greater government interventions such as quarantine, cancellation of mass events and closure of schools. But they are far less willing to accept such moves if it were only to reduce the number of people getting sick but who do not die.

Assistant Professor Vincent Pang, Director, Centre for Infectious Disease Epidemiology and Research (CIDER), shared that the whole-of-society approach for Zika control may have helped reduce the number of dengue cases in Singapore, as both viruses are carried by the Aedes mosquito. However, Singapore cannot afford to relax community efforts in battling dengue, and a community-wide approach remains critical to prevent the next dengue outbreak in the country. In addition, on top of providing clinical care, primary healthcare doctors play a crucial role in contributing to the surveillance, research and prevention of dengue.

“Vaccines remain one of the most cost-effective ways of preventing infectious diseases. Although the influenza vaccination does not work exceptionally well for the individual, better herd immunity develops when a sufficiently large proportion of the population are vaccinated, resulting in some protection for the rest who are not.” — Associate Professor Hsu Li Yang, Infectious Diseases Programme Leader

“Overuse of antibiotics to treat conditions for which they are unnecessary or ineffective is a major cause of antibiotic resistance. Responsible antibiotic use, like vaccination and wearing seatbelts, is everyone’s responsibility. Antibiotics are not always the best treatment for infections. If we do not think twice about how we use them, the best treatment could soon be nothing.” — Assistant Professor Clarence Tam
Knowledge Exchange

Information sharing lies at the heart of the translational work the School does. And the fostering of collaboration with partners in different research fields and geographic areas serves as a critical foundation and conveyor of knowledge exchange. The School has, over the past year, continually established and maintained new relationships with various institutions in the region to mutually share expertise and experience in public health research and education, as well as identify needs and opportunities for translational research.

25 Aug 2017: Akademi Farmasi (AKFAR), Jambi Province, Indonesia

Professor Chia Kee Seng met with Dr Kusumawati, Director of AKFAR (left) and Mr Andrianto, Special Envoy and Officer-at-large for Jambi Province (right) to explore a collaboration in education, research and academia, as well as to enhance public health quality in Jambi Province.

11 Jan 2018: Hon. Walt Secord, MLC, Shadow Minister for Health, New South Wales, Australia

The Hon. Walt Secord was welcomed and hosted by Professor Teo Yik Ying, Dean, Associate Professor Alex Cook, Vice Dean (Research), and Professor Rob van Dam, Vice Dean (Academic Affairs). Mr Secord is a senior member of the opposition party in New South Wales and visited SSHSPH to learn about Singapore’s approach to health services, how the School’s research played a pivotal role in driving Singapore’s War on Diabetes, and how data can be used to understand and perform economic analysis of disease burden.

17 Apr 2018: Department of Health Behavior, Environment and Social Medicine (HBES), Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), Indonesia

Prof Teo and Associate Professor Norbert Wagner hosted Professor Dra Yayi Surya Prabandari, Lecturer, and undergraduate students from the Department of HBES, Faculty of Medicine, UGM who visited SSHSPH to learn more about the School’s strategies in promoting occupational safety, health and wellness under the Total Workplace Safety and Health initiative.

1 Mar 2018: Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Faculty of Public Health, Khon Kaen University (KKU), Thailand

Prof Teo, A/Prof Cook, Dr Clarence Tam and Dr Rick Ong hosted Assistant Professor Naowarat Maneenin, Head of Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, and Dr Supot Kamsa-ard from KKU’s Faculty of Public Health. During the visit, both parties discussed ways to manage an ageing society, as well as strategies for chronic and infectious disease prevention programmes.
2 May 2018: Union School of Public Health, Peking Union Medical College (PUMC), China

The Union School of Public Health (USPH) is a joint venture between PUMC and the China Center for Disease Control, combining the resources of these institutions in the fields of teaching, research, and disease control and prevention. It is the first college in China to train postgraduate students oriented towards public health, to produce high-level professionals who understand the practice in China and have both management capabilities and real-world problem-solving abilities.

Delegates from USPH visited the Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health to exchange ideas on healthcare systems, prevention and control on chronic and infectious diseases, and treatment and control of cancer. Opportunities for collaboration between the schools and countries were also discussed during the visit.

On 4 May, an MOU was signed between the PUMC Union School of Public Health and the NUS Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health. This partnership will explore public health capacity building between the two schools and countries, through the exchange of scientific, academic and technical information.

11 May 2018: Department of Environmental and Occupational Health, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)

Professor Teo Yik Ying, Dean, Associate Professor Norbert Wagner, Dr Jeff Hwang Yi-Fu and Ms Vivian Ng hosted Dr Shaharuddin Mohd Sham, Senior Lecturer, and undergraduate students from the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, UPM and shared about the School’s research and initiatives in environmental and occupational health.

France and Singapore’s National Schools of Public Health Sign Memorandum of Understanding

In July 2018, the School inked a Memorandum of Understanding with the French School of Public Health, Ecole des hautes études en santé publique (EHESP).

The partnership will see both national schools of public health come together to explore joint capacity building of public health research and operations in Southeast Asia, specifically in healthcare management, and to exchange knowledge on health systems in Singapore and France.

The SPH-EHESP MOU is part of a larger collaboration between the Université Sorbonne Paris Cité (USPC) and the National University of Singapore: USPC and NUS first established a partnership in 2013 to provide seed funding to encourage joint academic exchanges between USPC institutions and NUS. On 13 July 2018, François Houllier, President of USPC, and Mr Fung Fun Man, Assistant Director of Education, NUS Institute for Application of Learning Science and Educational Technology (ALSET-NUS), exchanged an addendum to the USPC-NUS memorandum of understanding that will strengthen the current partnership between the institutions in Life Sciences (Medicine and Public Health), Social Sciences and Learning Sciences.
Giving

Bursary honours late prominent Chinese leader and wife

The gift that shaped us
Bursary honours late prominent Chinese leader and wife

NUS alumna, Dr Chen Deah Chien ('73), has set up the Mr and Mrs Chen Sing Wu Bursary at the NUS Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health in honour of her late parents.

Her father, the late Mr Chen Sing Wu, was an esteemed diplomat, businessman and community leader. Born in 1911 in Fujian’s Zhangzhou Haicheng, he received his education at Tan Kah Kee’s Jimei High School and Xiamen University. In his younger days, Mr Chen served as a Trade Representative for the then Republic of China, and he was sent to Southeast Asia to oversee the affairs of overseas Chinese in the cities of Pontianak, Surabaya and Cirebon in Indonesia. He was elected the President of the Pontianak Chinese General Association (Zhonghua Gonghui) and President of the Chen Clan Association, among many others. Settling in Singapore in the late 1940s, Mr Chen subsequently became a banker. He was the Chief Liaison Officer at Chung Khiaw Bank and then worked as the Business Advisor to OCBC’s Tan Sri Tan Chin Tuan.

A trained accountant and lawyer with over 25 extensive years of experience in the accounting, legal and banking fields, Dr Chen has always been a crusader for health. She majored in Accountancy at the National University of Singapore, but has always been passionate about nutrition and health. This led her to train in nutrition at the Tufts University Friedman School of Nutrition, and further her studies in public health at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and Columbia Mailman School of Public Health, where she eventually obtained her Master in Public Health. Her experiences working on the grounds of the Boston Medical Center, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and Hebrew Rehabilitation Center in Boston also shaped her conviction that health is indeed wealth.

In 2011, she founded Harvest Prime, an enterprise that raises funds for charities like Red Cross and World Vision to educate school children and young adults on healthy living. Dedicated to her mission of reducing chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes and heart problems, she strongly believes that the key lies in starting from an early age and educating the young about health and nutrition.

“I hope this gift will enable more aspiring public health professionals to pursue their Master of Public Health at the School, so that they may be empowered to promote the prevention of diseases and improve the health of their communities,” said Dr Chen.

Indeed, the School has — for nearly 70 years — been committed to educating, mentoring and inspiring our students to advance population health across the world. With its mission of turning discovery into healthier communities, the School has much to offer students from Singapore and the region who want to become agents of change to improve the health of their communities. Yet for many students who seek the best public health education in the region to make the greatest impact, lack of financial resources is the most significant barrier they face.

Dr Chen’s generous gift to deserving students with financial need helps spread the strengths of the School in its depth of experience in public health research, education and training of future leadership. Her support will also encourage them to follow in the footsteps of both the late Mr Chen Sing Wu with his exemplary selfless, steadfast service to his community, as well as follow the lead of Dr Chen to help others in need when they are in a position to do so in future.
Professor Saw Swee Hock is a distinguished NUS alumnus, professor and philanthropist, whose landmark $30 million gift enabled the establishment of Singapore’s first and only public health school on 1 October 2011: the NUS Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health.

He is well-known for his philanthropic contributions to various charitable causes both locally and globally, particularly in the area of tertiary education, to advance higher education, research and social mobility among less privileged students. His generous gifts have benefited many universities such as the London School of Economics (LSE), Xiamen University, University of Hong Kong (HKU), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore Management University and Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS).

Prof Saw has received numerous accolades for his philanthropic and academic achievements. He has been conferred the Outstanding Service Award by NUS, the Singapore President’s Award for Philanthropy and the Public Service Medal at the 2013 National Day Awards. In 2014, he was named as one of the ‘48 Heroes of Philanthropy’ in the Asia-Pacific region by Forbes Asia Magazine. As an illustrious academic, he holds honorary positions at LSE, Xiamen University, HKU and NUS among others. He was formerly on the NUS Board of Trustees and is currently Professorial Fellow at ISEAS.
Awards and Honours
Awards and Honours

Faculty Research Awards

In May 2018, Assistant Professors Clarence Tam and Falk Mueller-Riemenschneider were conferred the SSHSPH Faculty Research Awards for the academic year 2016/2017.

Dr Clarence Tam was awarded the SSHSPH Young Researcher Award AY2016/2017 for demonstrating great potential in research and achieving research excellence.

Dr Falk Mueller-Riemenschneider was awarded the SSHSPH Teaching Excellence Award AY2016/2017 in recognition of his teaching excellence and high level of performance, dedication and commitment to public health teaching and learning.

Student Awards

Dean’s List
Recognises students’ outstanding academic performance for the semester and awarded to the top 5% of students with the highest Semester or Academic Year average point.

Semester 1
Hazel Koh Xin Yu
Pream Raj s/o Sinnasamy
Victoria Koh Rui Ying
Zhang Yiwen

Semester 2
Andrea Lim Su En
Gabriel Chia Shi Zhe
Lee Ja Jia
Sharon Tan Hui Xuan
Siti Zubaidah Binte Yusoff
Victoria Koh Rui Ying

Tye Cho Yook Gold Medal
Awarded to the student who has distinguished himself/herself in the examination leading to the degree of Master of Public Health

Occupational and Environmental Health Society Medal
Awarded to the student who has most distinguished himself/herself in the examination leading to the degree of Master of Public Health (with specialisation in Occupational Health)

Gabriel Chia Shi Zhe

Gabriel Chia, recipient of the Tye Cho Yook Gold Medal, and Occupational and Environmental Health Society Medal, with Prof Teo at the SSHSPH AlumNite 2018 Pre-Commencement Celebration. Gabriel received his medals during the SSHSPH Commencement Ceremony the following day.

Richard Gillis Prize
Awarded to the graduating student pursuing a specialisation in Occupational Health in the Master of Public Health programme who achieves the best academic results and who also distinguishes himself/herself in the Industrial Hygiene component of the course.

Dominic Tan Shuwen

Dean’s Medal and Prize
Awarded each year to the student from the Master of Public Health Programme who has achieved the highest mark for the Practicum

Pream Raj s/o Sinnasamy

Dean, Prof Teo Yik Ying (centre) and Vice Dean (Education), A/Prof Jeannette Lee (1st from right) with the Dean’s List recipients Sharon Tan, Siti Zubaidah, Lee Ja Jia, Gabriel Chia, Andrea Lim, Victoria Koh and Pream Raj.
Graduate Student Research Award
Three awards are available each year, one for each domain, for the graduate research student who has distinguished himself/herself in research, as assessed by the quality and quantity of the publications since matriculation and the public health impact of the student’s work.

Zhao Xiahong
Biostatistics and Modelling domain
Thesis Title: Statistical Modelling of Upper Respiratory Tract Infections

Mohammad Talaei Pashiri
Epidemiology domain
Thesis Title: Calcium and its food sources, dairy and soy foods, in relation to cardiometabolic diseases

Wang Gungwu Medal and Prize
The university-wide award recognises the research achievements of graduate students. Three awards are available each year for i) Best PhD thesis in the Natural Sciences, ii) Best PhD thesis in the Social Sciences/Humanities, and iii) Best Master’s thesis in the Social Sciences/Humanities.

Lim Boon Tar Raymond
(Best PhD thesis in the Social Sciences/Humanities)
Raymond is also a recipient of the Graduate Student Research Award (Health Systems & Behavioural Sciences domain) for his thesis: Impact of a health promotion and sexually transmitted infection (STI) prevention programme for entertainment establishments (EEs) in Singapore.