

# New research institute to tackle ageing issues

By **CALVIN YANG**

FROM understanding the elderly's challenges to coming up with innovations to boost support for their caregivers, a research facility dedicated to helping Singapore deal with an increasingly older population was unveiled yesterday.

The Next Age Institute (NAI) is an academic partnership between the National University of Singapore (NUS) and Washington University in St Louis (WUSTL) in the United States.

It will tackle social issues arising from an ageing population, such as intergenerational relationships and financial adequacy.

Its research includes disciplines like social work, economics, law, medicine, engineering and architecture.

"Ageing is a complex phenomenon and we need researchers from various disciplines to come together to share their findings," said Associate Professor Corinne Ghoh, NAI co-director at

NUS. "Only then can we examine the issues from different perspectives and make a greater impact."

By 2030, one in five residents are expected to be 65 or older.

"Our old-age support ratio is falling and elderly parents will be increasingly dependent on a smaller number of adult children," said Senior Minister of State for Health and Manpower Amy Khor at yesterday's launch.

"While science and technology have added more life years, the challenge for us is to innovate new ways to translate these additional years in lifespan to healthy and productive years of life."

This year, the NAI, which is based at NUS and WUSTL, will begin a pilot study on care services for elderly patients who have been hospitalised for serious conditions, such as stroke and hip fractures, and the care they receive after discharge.

The research, involving 30 families, will look into the possibility of



**Driving the Next Age Institute are (from left) Professor Michael Sherraden, Associate Professor Chia Ngee Choon and Associate Professor Corinne Ghoh. ST PHOTO: MARK CHEONG**

conducting another one-year longitudinal study to track the caregiving support for seniors and their family members.

These include day-care centres and family caregiving arrangements.

The institute will also embark on other research projects, including studying options for financing retirement

needs. "The focus of the institute is not just on ageing people," said Professor Michael Sherraden, NAI director at WUSTL.

"It is also on social issues that arise and are interrelated with the ageing population, and creating appropriate social innovations to address them."

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