

New research centre to study ageing issues

By **KOK XING HUI**

A NEW research centre in Singapore on ageing will study how factors such as loneliness interplay with the medical conditions of the elderly.

This broader canvas will add value to ageing-related research, which currently tends to focus more on the medical aspects, said Senior Minister of State for Health Amy Khor.

The Centre for Ageing, Research and Education (Care), which is set up by the Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School, will see investigators in social sciences, engineering and architecture working with clinicians and bio-

logical scientists.

Dr Khor said research at Care has already shown that mortality risk – traditionally calculated using numbers and types of diseases present – can be affected by a person's level of loneliness.

“An older adult with diabetes who is lonely has a significantly higher mortality risk as compared with his counterpart who is not lonely,” she said.

Studying how the built environment and health technology can help with successful ageing in Singapore is one of the areas which Director of Care, Associate Professor Angelique Chan, wants to look into.

Other social issues related to

ageing that Care will study include how different generations allocate their finances and time to take care of the elderly, said Prof Chan.

Dr Khor also shared the results of a Care study that involved teaching seniors with chronic diseases about nutrition and exercise, stress management, and giving them access to healthcare resources.

The study of 378 such seniors found that equipping the elderly with knowledge on how to manage their health increased the odds of them replenishing their medications and going for follow-up appointments with their doctors.

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