

Learning CPR from a 'zombie attack'

In Code Blue, participants learn first aid through fun and games

Gurveen Kaur

For every 100 cardiac arrest cases that occur outside of the hospital in Singapore, only 11 survive.

The startlingly dismal statistic – gathered from cases from 2010 to 2012 and revealed in a study by medical specialists last year – spurred fifth-year medical student Wong Wen Kai to start Code Blue last year, a free annual initiative where participants learn first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) through fun and games.

The 23-year-old student from the National University of Singapore (NUS) says: "Currently, learning first aid is typically done in a more didactic and dry manner. We want to get people excited and motivated to learn it in a more fun environment."

On Sunday, the second edition of Code Blue will take place at the indoor Ground Theatre in *Scape mall. This time, participants will have to save a casualty who has collapsed and is trapped in a dark labyrinth during a zombie apocalypse.

In groups of three to five, they will treat the casualty and protect him from the onslaught of zombies by using Nerf guns as they make their way out. First aid resources such as bandages will be scattered throughout the 7 by 7m maze for participants to use.

Along the way, the participants will apply the first aid and CPR skills taught beforehand. They will watch a video on how to administer first aid such as treating bleeding, sprains and fractures as well as CPR before practising on a person or dummy.

The zombies coupled with the maze format make for a "high-stress environment... similar to a real-life situation during emergencies", says



The first edition of Code Blue (left) was held at NUS' University Town last year. Most of the 300 participants were students, who engaged in an escape game, race and Nerf gun battle.

PHOTO: JOEL CHOO

Mr Wong. Although players will not be certified, unlike in formal first aid courses, what they learn is a condensed version of the same steps taught in the course at no cost.

Mr Wong says: "While their techniques may not be as well-honed as a person who has gone to a first aid course, they have a basic toolkit to assist a stranger on the streets until help arrives."

Each round is expected to take up to 30 minutes to complete and prizes such as a first aid kit and bandages will be given out according to how quickly each group gets out of the

maze. Players will get goodie bags which come with a free Code Blue participant T-shirt and vouchers.

The initiative is run by the non-profit youth organisation Amberbrook, which Mr Wong founded, and supported by the Tote Board, NUS Community Engagement Fund and National Youth Council's Young ChangeMakers grant.

There will be more than 100 volunteers to facilitate and help out. Most of them are equipped with first aid skills and those who were not were trained by Mr Wong and a team of first aiders and

medical students from NUS.

The event's name is derived from a hospital code that is used when a patient is in cardiopulmonary arrest and requires a specially trained team (the code team) to rush over and begin resuscitation.

Mr Wong says: "We felt it was relevant to a course about first aid and CPR and reflected the mood we wanted to create."

With a more central location this year, he expects 500 people to attend. Last year's first edition was held at NUS' University Town and most of the 300 participants were

students, who engaged in an escape game, race and Nerf gun battle.

Mr Wayne Soh, a second-year ITE nursing student who attended last year's event, plans to go with his friends again. The 18-year-old found it "very fun and interesting" even though he already knows how to perform first aid and CPR.

He says: "It's a good idea to teach first aid this way versus a classroom setting. Although it was a refresher course for me, I felt that I could remember the steps better."

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BOOK IT / CODE BLUE

WHERE: The Ground Theatre, *Scape, 2 Orchard Link

WHEN: Sunday, 10am to 7pm

ADMISSION: Free, but online registration is recommended

INFO: Sign up at bit.ly/codebluefun or go to www.facebook.com/codeblue.ab