

Tap on science and technology to transform ageing: Amy Khor



Senior Minister of State for Health Amy Khor said that "it is important for us to unlock the promise of longevity by making full use of the potential of science and technology". PHOTO: ST FILE

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SINGAPORE - Smart pill dispenser Pillpresso sorts and dispenses medicine at the touch of a button.

The machine also "talks" to a mobile app to alert seniors through their devices to take their medication on time.

And when the pills are dispensed, caregivers and family members are notified through the same mobile app.

Pillpresso, about the size of a coffee machine, is an example of how science and technology can be tapped to empower the elderly to manage their medical conditions, said Senior Minister of State for Health Amy Khor on Thursday (Dec 1).

Speaking at the Transforming Ageing with Health Innovation forum held at the National University of Singapore (NUS), Dr Khor said science and technology should also be harnessed to transform how rehabilitation services are delivered, and to preserve health and delay the onset of disease.

By 2030, one in four Singaporeans will be aged 65 years and above, compared to one in eight today.

"Good health underpins successful ageing. With good health, individuals can be productive with longevity," said Dr Khor.

a "fiscal challenge on our society if we spend longer years in illness".

"Hence, it is important for us to unlock the promise of longevity by making full use of the potential of science and technology, to expand our 'health span' even as our life span increases."

For example, Dr Khor said the Integrated Health Information Systems is working with various hospitals and rehabilitation service providers in the community to trial tele-rehabilitation systems.

They work for patients who are recovering from stroke and other conditions and allow patients to be rehabilitated in their own homes.

She said the Health Ministry also launched HealthHub last year which allows Singaporeans and permanent residents to assess their public health records online by using their SingPass accounts. HealthHub also provides tips on staying healthy.

Separately, NUS Enterprise and pharmaceutical company Bayer launched Grants4Apps Singapore yesterday.

The crowdsourcing initiative grants financial support to developers, startups and entrepreneurs to develop their ideas for apps, hardware and software technology to improve health outcomes.

The challenge is open to everyone in Singapore and Asia Pacific. Three winners will receive \$10,000 and given support by NUS Enterprise to incubate their ideas.

The window for entry submissions closes on Feb 14, 2017.