

# Focus on preventive care to improve heart health: Report

It calls for shift away from acute care model to reduce incidence of cardiovascular diseases

Felicia Choo

Asia-Pacific countries should move away from an acute care model to a preventive one in order to reduce the incidence of cardiovascular diseases, a new report says.

The Healthy Hearts, Healthy Ageing Asia Pacific Report also recommends better access to innovative therapies and technologies, as well as the need for data to understand the current burden of disease and plan for the future.

The report was released yesterday by pharmaceutical company Bayer and the entrepreneurial arm

of the National University of Singapore (NUS), NUS Enterprise.

It is based on the insights of experts from Australia, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines.

The report noted that Singapore has been embracing the recommended step-down care model, where patients can leave the main hospitals to recuperate in facilities once they have been stabilised after a heart attack or stroke.

To facilitate this, the Government plans to add 4,200 nursing home beds, 2,200 daycare places and 2,500 home care places between 2017 and next year.

Professor Tan Huay Cheem, director of the National University Heart Centre Singapore, said that governments across the world have important roles to play in cardiovascular disease prevention.

“The first is to provide evidence-based, cost-effective care; secondly, put in place legislative measures like raising the legal age of smoking or reducing the sugar content in beverages,” he added. “Lastly, governments should work towards improving the general economic health of the population, because that will effectively eliminate some of the disease of poverty.”

The report’s launch was officiated by Senior Minister of State for Health Amy Khor at Innovfest Unbound 2019, being held at Sands Expo and Convention Centre at Marina Bay Sands from yesterday to to-



Associate Professor Angelique Chan, executive director of the Centre for Ageing, Research and Education at Duke-NUS Medical School, speaking at the Healthy Hearts, Healthy Ageing Asia Pacific Report launch. With her is National University Heart Centre Singapore director Tan Huay Cheem. ST PHOTO: NG SOR LUAN

day. Some 15,000 entrepreneurs, brands, corporates, investors and technology start-ups are expected to attend the festival.

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ity and offering healthier food to consumers, the Government is looking at innovations in Singapore’s infrastructure and city design.

“The Land Transport Master Plan 2040, for example, envisions a land transport system that is safer and healthier, filled with vibrant community spaces,” she said, adding that this would entail more walking and cycling paths, sheltered linkways and less noise from public transport.

Another way is to apply behavioural science in policies, programmes and services, such as using simplified labels or healthier choice defaults to nudge consumers towards healthier choices, she added.

Yesterday, Bayer also launched a disease management app for elderly atrial fibrillation patients – who have a chronic heart rhythm disorder associated with increasing age – and their caregivers.

[feliciac@sph.com.sg](mailto:feliciac@sph.com.sg)