

# NUS' Covid-19 reports shared across the world

Papers give current information on diagnostic tests, treatments, public health measures and more

**Joyce Teo**  
Senior Health Correspondent

When the coronavirus epidemic started in Singapore, the Ministry of Health's (MOH) chief health scientist Tan Chorh Chuan asked the National University of Singapore's Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health (SSHSPH) for help to scour the academic and business worlds for relevant information on diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines.

Within four days, a report was put together for the MOH and other ministries involved in the response.

Associate Professor Hsu Li Yang, programme leader of the Infectious Diseases Programme at SSHSPH, said: "We delivered a first-cut science report which we have been updating every week, highlighting the new stuff for the regular readers. That was Week 1."

In the following weeks, more chapters on topics such as containment measures, clinical characteristics, lockdowns and social distancing were added.

"It's the first time that there is a dedicated group compiling and making sense of all the published scientific reports on treating, man-

aging and controlling the spread of an outbreak virus, in this case Sars-CoV-2," said Prof Hsu, who helps vet the reports.

"To our surprise, what started off as a simple, if urgent, request for a rapid scan of available information on diagnostics, vaccines and therapeutics has gone on to reach audiences well beyond our original intent," he added.

The reports, which can be found at [www.sph.nus.edu.sg/covid-19](http://www.sph.nus.edu.sg/covid-19), have been shared with academics and policymakers worldwide.

Professor Tan said the reports have been very useful for the MOH's work, as they provide up-to-date and rigorously curated information, all in one document. "The areas covered are highly relevant, including diagnostic tests, treatments, vaccines and the public health measures adopted by different countries."

The reports are produced by a nine-person team at the school's Public Health Translational Team (PHTT), which is funded by the MOH to support policy formulation and implementation.

Associate Professor Jason Yap, director of the PHTT unit, said the reports have been shared directly with their regional collaborators in academia and healthcare, and with the World Health Organisation's Science Division.

He said the reports have been downloaded about 8,000 times since they were put online.

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**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR HSU LI YANG**, programme leader of the Infectious Diseases Programme at the National University of Singapore's Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health.

"We understand also that the reports have been brought to the attention of the 120 members of the American Association of Academic Health Centres International, and tweeted by Santa J. Ono, the president and vice-chancellor of the University of British Columbia."

Most recently, SSHSPH's diagnostics report was sent to Dr Anthony Fauci, the top infectious disease expert in the United States who is helping to lead the response to the country's Covid-19 outbreak.

"The use and impact of the reports is hard to gauge because we do not have sight of what happens after the access, but so far we've been receiving appreciation and acknowledgements of their value," Prof Yap said.

The project is unusual also in terms of the speed of turnaround required. Prof Yap said that on a recent Friday morning, Prof Tan asked the team for a report on lockdowns and social distancing for a discussion at the MOH on Monday.

"The team started work that afternoon, dividing the tasks, gathering the data, synthesising the sections of the report, all separately from their homes. The full draft was sent to me on Sunday evening for the final review, and I sent in the report at 2am on Monday."

The unit is working on more reports, on intensive care, stay-home measures and innovations.

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



Medical staff in full personal protective equipment with a suspected Covid-19 patient last month. When the coronavirus epidemic started in Singapore, the Ministry of Health's chief health scientist Tan Chorh Chuan asked the National University of Singapore's Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health for help to scour the academic and business worlds for relevant information on diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines. Within four days, a report had been put together to help the ministries involved in the response. ST FILE PHOTO