

National Disease Management Plans for Key Chronic Non-communicable Diseases in Singapore

C C Tan,**FRCP, FACP, PhD*

Abstract

In Singapore, chronic, non-communicable diseases, namely coronary heart disease, stroke and cancer, account for more than 60% of all deaths and a high burden of disability and healthcare expenditure. The burden of these diseases is likely to rise with our rapidly ageing population and changing lifestyles, and will present profound challenges to our healthcare delivery and financing systems over the next 20 to 30 years. The containment and optimal management of these conditions require a strong emphasis on patient education and the development of integrated models of healthcare delivery in place of the present uncoordinated, compartmentalised way of delivering healthcare. To meet these challenges, the Ministry of Health's major thrusts are disease control measures which focus mainly on primary prevention; and disease management, which coordinates the national effort to reduce the incidence of these key diseases and their predisposing factors and to ameliorate their long-term impact by optimising control to reduce mortality, morbidity and complications, and improving functional status through rehabilitation. The key initiatives include restructuring of the public sector healthcare institutions into two clusters, each comprising a network of primary health care polyclinics, regional hospitals and tertiary institutions. The functional integration of these healthcare elements within each cluster under a common senior administrative and professional management, and the development of common clinical IT systems will greatly facilitate the implementation of disease management programmes. Secondly, the Ministry is establishing National Disease Registries in coronary heart disease, cancer, stroke, myopia and kidney failure, which will be valuable sources of clinical and outcomes data. Thirdly, in partnership with expert groups, national committees and professional agencies, the Ministry will produce clinical practice guidelines which will assist doctors and healthcare professionals to better manage important aspects of the key diseases. Finally, the Ministry has committed funds to support selected National Disease Management programmes, illustrated by the disease management plan for asthma.

Ann Acad Med Singapore 2002; 31:415-8

Key words: Clinical practice guidelines, National Disease Registries

* Director, Medical Services
Ministry of Health, Singapore

Address for Reprints: Dr Tan Chorh Chuan, Ministry of Health, Singapore, 16 College Road, College of Medicine Building, Singapore 169854.