

MEDIA RELEASE

4 October 2022

For Immediate Release

NUHS EMBARKS ON MULTIDOMAIN LIFESTYLE INTERVENTION STUDY TO REDUCE COGNITIVE DECLINE AND PHYSICAL FRAILITY IN OLDER ADULTS

Singapore, 4 October 2022 – National University Health System (NUHS) has embarked on a multidomain lifestyle intervention study which aims to delay cognitive decline and physical frailty in older adults at risk of dementia.

The SINGapore GERiatric intervention study to reduce cognitive decline and physical frailty (SINGER) randomised controlled trial uses a multidomain lifestyle intervention approach, which had shown to be effective by the Finnish Geriatric Intervention Study to Prevent Cognitive Impairment and Disability (FINGER) trial.

In Singapore, a pilot study of a six-month lifestyle intervention had demonstrated the cultural feasibility and practicality of the FINGER interventions and a set of locally adapted interventions in the Asian population. This led to a successful application for a Large Collaborative Grant of up to five years from the National Medical Research Council in 2021 to undertake a larger trial of a two-year long intervention programme.

“The SINGER study is part of the Worldwide-FINGERS international network, which is at the forefront of harmonising approaches to effective non-pharmacological interventions in delaying cognitive decline in older adults at risk of dementia. Through the study, we hope to demonstrate the efficacy and raise awareness on the importance of lifestyle interventions as early prevention for cognitive impairment and dementia”, said Associate Professor Christopher Chen, Director of the Memory Ageing and Cognition Centre, NUHS. He is also an Associate Professor in the Department of Pharmacology, Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, National University of Singapore (NUS), and a Visiting Consultant in the Department of Psychological Medicine, National University Hospital.

Dementia is a brain disease caused by damage to structures in the brain, abnormal protein accumulation around and lost connections between brain cells. Today, one in 10 seniors who are aged 60 and above in Singapore has dementia. Neurological diseases such as dementia are the fifth leading cause of disability in Singapore. With increased life expectancy and a rapidly ageing population, the number of people with dementia is projected to increase to 187,000 by 2050. Dementia will strongly impact individuals, their families and the healthcare system.

Nearly 40 per cent of dementia cases globally are estimated to be attributable to modifiable lifestyle, vascular, or metabolic risk factors. Of note, reducing the prevalence of each of these risk factors by 10 per cent or 20 per cent per decade may reduce Alzheimer’s Disease prevalence worldwide by 8 per cent to 15 per cent by 2050.

The SINGER study aims to recruit 1,200 seniors aged between 60 to 77 years old, who have a Cardiovascular Risk Factors, Ageing, and Incidence of Dementia (CAIDE) Dementia Risk Score¹ of more or equal to 6. Participants will be recruited from community-dwelling and clinical cohorts of Singaporean older residents.

The study will examine if randomised assignment to a Self-Guided Intervention (SGI) versus Structured Lifestyle Intervention (SLI) focused on regular aerobic exercise, adherence to the FINGER diet, cognitive and social stimulation, and protocol-based vascular risk factor management, improves cognitive or memory performance as measured by cognitive assessments. Since August 2021, more than 350 participants had been recruited to date and they are engaged in the lifestyle interventions through partnerships with community based organisations such as Lions Befrienders and ActiveSG. SINGER is also part of the Health District @ Queenstown programme, which is co-led by NUHS, NUS and the Housing & Development Board.

The study aims to implement its findings into public health and clinical practice by informing policy makers and guiding the design of community, and individual-level health promotion initiatives.

For information and to participate in the SINGER study, please visit:

<http://www.macc.sg/SINGER-Memory-Clinical-Trials-Dementia-Prevention>

-end-

¹ Cardiovascular Risk Factors, Aging, and Incidence of Dementia (CAIDE) Dementia Risk Score is a validated tool to predict late-life dementia risk (20 years later) based on a multifactorial risk calculation, taking into account the age, education and selected vascular risk factors of an individual.

Chinese Glossary

Associate Professor Christopher Chen Director Memory Ageing and Cognition Centre National University Health System	曾礼贤副教授 主任, Memory Ageing and Cognition Centre 国立大学医学组织 (国大医学组织)
Associate Professor Department of Pharmacology Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine National University of Singapore	副教授, 药理学系 新加坡国立大学杨潞龄医学院 (国大杨潞龄医学院)
Visiting Consultant Department of Psychological Medicine National University Hospital	客座顾问医生 心理医学科部门 国立大学医院 (国大医院)
SINGapore GERiatric intervention study	新加坡年长者减少认知障碍和身体虚弱的干预研究 (SINGER)
Dementia	失智症
Cognitive decline and physical frailty	认知障碍和身体虚弱
Multidomain lifestyle interventions	多领域生活方式干预

For media enquiries, please contact:

Binny Tay
Senior Manager
Communications Office
National University Health System
DID: (65) 6772 4693
HP: (65) 9790 5398
Email: binny_tay@nuhs.edu.sg

About the National University Health System (NUHS)

The National University Health System (NUHS) aims to transform how illness is prevented and managed by discovering causes of disease, development of more effective treatments through collaborative multidisciplinary research and clinical trials, and creation of better technologies and care delivery systems in partnership with others who share the same values and vision.

Institutions in the NUHS Group include the National University Hospital, Ng Teng Fong General Hospital, Jurong Community Hospital and Alexandra Hospital; three National Specialty Centres - National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS), National University Heart Centre, Singapore (NUHCS) and National University Centre for Oral Health, Singapore (NUCOHS); the National University Polyclinics (NUP); Jurong Medical Centre; and three NUS health sciences schools – NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (including the Alice Lee Centre for Nursing Studies), NUS Faculty of Dentistry and NUS Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health.

With member institutions under a common governance structure, NUHS creates synergies for the advancement of health by integrating patient care, health science education and biomedical research.

As a Regional Health System, NUHS works closely with health and social care partners across Singapore to develop and implement programmes that contribute to a healthy and engaged population in the Western part of Singapore.

For more information, please visit <http://www.nuhs.edu.sg>

About National University of Singapore (NUS)

The National University of Singapore (NUS) is Singapore's flagship university, which offers a global approach to education, research and entrepreneurship, with a focus on Asian perspectives and expertise. We have 16 colleges, faculties and schools across three campuses in Singapore, with more than 40,000 students from 100 countries enriching our vibrant and diverse campus community. We have also established our NUS Overseas Colleges programme in more than 15 cities around the world.

Our multidisciplinary and real-world approach to education, research and entrepreneurship enables us to work closely with industry, governments and academia to address crucial and complex issues relevant to Asia and the world. Researchers in our faculties, 30 university-level research institutes, research centres of excellence and corporate labs focus on themes that include energy; environmental and urban sustainability; treatment and prevention of diseases; active ageing; advanced materials; risk management and resilience of financial systems; Asian studies; and Smart Nation capabilities such as artificial intelligence, data science, operations research and cybersecurity.

For more information on NUS, please visit www.nus.edu.sg.