

Patient Forum on “Healthy Body, Healthy Mind” Written by Tan KK

Forum on “Health Body, Healthy Mind” for PAS members on 6 May 2017. By Mr. Tan KK



The above forum was conducted by three speakers from Changi General Hospital.

The first speaker was Dr. Fadzil Hamzah from Changi Sport Medicine Centre who spoke on the Metabolic Syndrome. It is defined as several conditions that can increase your risk for diabetes, stroke and heart disease. These include insulin resistance, high blood pressure, elevated blood glucose and lipid levels, tendency to develop blood clots, and too much fat around the waist. He said that there is dysfunctional adipose tissue or ectopic fat which leads to visceral obesity and Insulin resistance. These will cause hypertension, Inflammation, thrombosis, elevated lipid and glucose levels. For the clinical diagnosis of the Metabolic Syndrome, three or more of the following features are present:

- Waist Circumference of at least 102 cm in men, and greater than 88 cm in women.
- High serum triglycerides more than 1.7 mmol/L
- Reduced high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol of less than 1.03 mmol/L in men or 1.29 mmol/L in women of this ‘good’ cholesterol.
- Increased blood pressure of more than 130/85 mmHg
- Elevated fasting blood sugar of more than 5.6 mmol/L

To avoid such a problem, he gave tips on staying active for a healthy life:

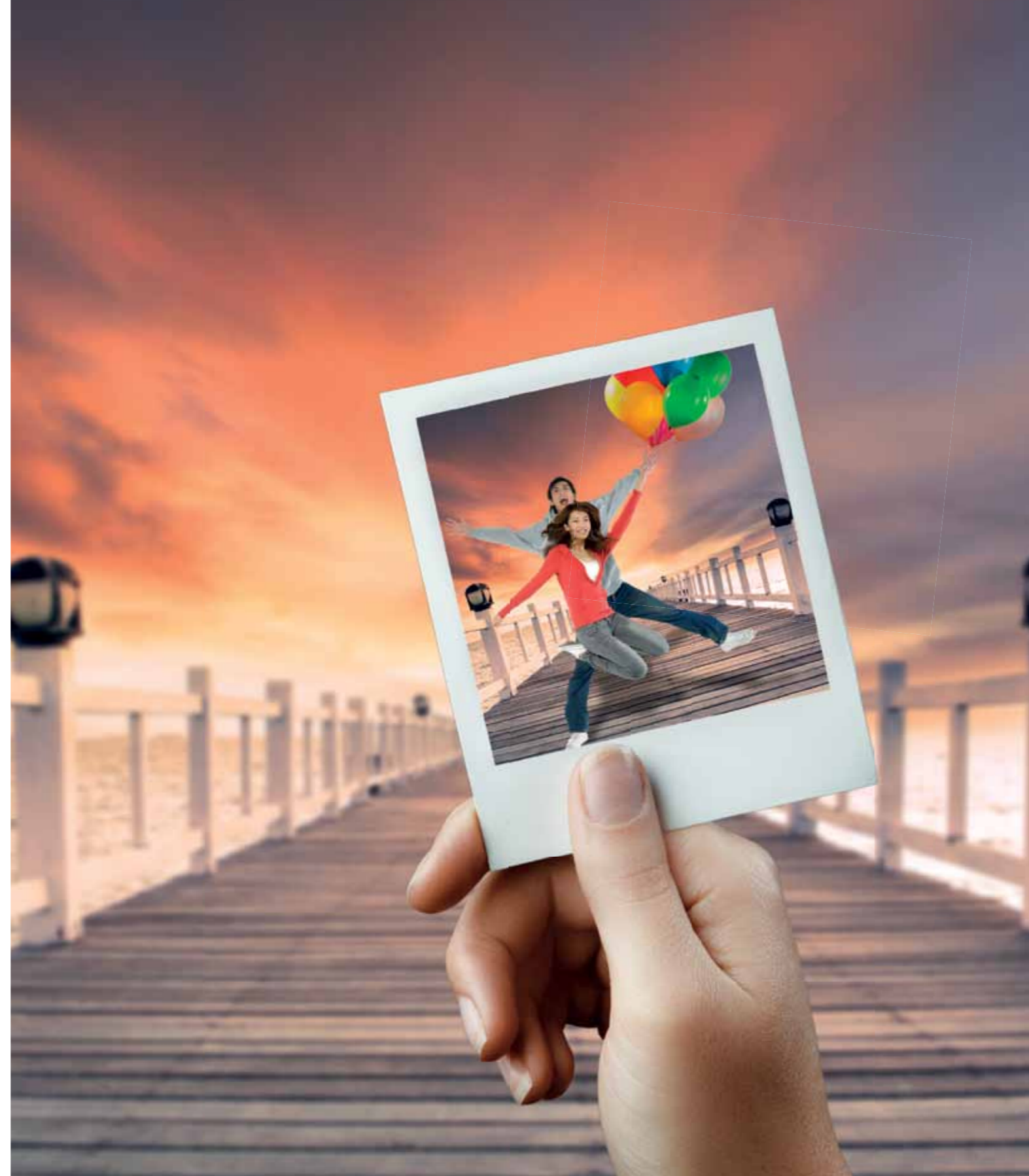
- Keep active, e.g. walk around while talking on the phone.
- Go strolling in the park with your family.
- Walk around your neighbourhood.

- Get off the couch and walk around your living room during TV commercial.
- Do your household chores daily e.g. gardening and watering the plants, vacuuming and mopping the floor or washing your car.
- Park your car away from the entrance when you drive to the shopping complex or the workplace.
- Use the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Stretch regularly.

It doesn’t matter how fit you are today, the aim of any exercise program should be to progress. Try to do a little bit more tomorrow than you did today. If you do this you will reach levels you wouldn’t think possible today! The time you invest in exercise will give you the quality of life back, and this is what counts at the end of the day.

The second speaker was Ms. Yihong Fang, a senior occupational therapist. She spoke on how to have a healthy mind to manage psoriasis beyond managing the skin problem. During the talk, she made us share how we cope with the stress. She taught us step by step on how to release our stress by listening to the radio and practising breathing exercises that helps to calm our mind and emotions. We felt rested, calm, and in peaceful coexistence with all the psoriasis members. I felt very refreshed after the exercise.

The third speaker was Ms. Gladys Lim, a dietician. She spoke on how to select good and healthy foods that will help in controlling body weight and reducing blood pressure. She showed that there are many choices we can make. In summary, a healthy diet includes all food groups in the right proportion and making small changes in eating habits will lead to healthy life and prevention of chronic diseases



Helping *people* living with psoriasis.



LEO Pharma Asia Pte Ltd
5 Temasek Boulevard #10-02, Suntec Tower Five, Singapore 038985 Tel:+65 68358558 . Fax: +65 68848163
Website: <http://www.leo-pharma.asia>

OFFICE BEARERS (2017/18)

President
Dr. Colin Theng

Vice President
Mr. Wong Foot Keng

Secretary
Ms. Valerie Poh

Asst Secretary
Ms. Kong Kim Yoke

Treasurer
Ms Tan Yoke Choo

Committee
Dr Koh Hong Yi
Mr Benjamin Goh
Mr Franky Yap
Mr John Koh
Mr Colin Binns
Ms Yanee
Ms Alice Sin
Ms Siti Fatimah

Auditors
Mr Gary Ng
Dr Hazel Oon

Editors
Dr. Tham Siew Nee
Ms. Tan Yoke Choo

Medical Consultants
A.Prof. Chong Wei Sheng
Dr. Cheong Wai Kwong
Dr. Eugene Tan
Dr. Hazel Oon
Dr. Heng Yee Kiat
Dr. Koh Hong Yi
Dr. Lim Kar Seng
Dr. Pan Jiun Yit
Dr. Tham Siew Nee
A.Prof. Thirumoorthy
Dr. Wong Su Ni
Dr Yew Yik Weng

Contact PAS
Email: psoriasissg@gmail.com
Website: psoriasis.org.sg
Phone: 9005 8264

President’s Message

I was intrigued by an article someone forwarded to me about celebrities with psoriasis. I was surprised to learn that famous celebrities like Kim Kardashian and Lee Anne Rimes also suffer from psoriasis. I used to enjoy listening to Rimes’ music so I read with interest on her sharing of her life with psoriasis. Rimes had psoriasis when she was a child and she talked about how the other children would not want to mix with her and even called her ‘scaly girl’. She was constantly wearing clothes that could hide her psoriasis. Stress was a major trigger. She went through many treatments and eventually found the right treatment for her condition. She also found support groups very important in helping people cope with psoriasis.

Does her story sound familiar? Most people with psoriasis would be able to identify with Rimes’ story. Psoriasis can affect anyone regardless of age, race, gender and socio-economic status. It is sometimes comforting to know that you are not alone with your psoriasis and that are many people out there who also face the same fear, isolation and stress. Many people have found that talking and sharing about their psoriasis with others with psoriasis help to relief the stress and cope better with their condition. If you are troubled by your psoriasis or would simply like to talk to someone who has psoriasis, the Psoriasis Association is just a phone call away. Our dedicated members and support group will be most happy to hear from you.

God bless.

Colin Theng

BLOCK YOUR CALENDER



Duck tour written by John Koh and hwa chong boy

On the 8th of April, we gathered at Suntec City at 5pm for the ‘Duck Tour’ organized by the Psoriasis Association of Singapore (PAS). The evening’s activities were conducted by our able committee members and two professional hosts, Ms Sara Chueng and Mr Joe Chan.

Before the tour, Mr How Hee Loong, country manager of AbbVie, sponsor for the event, explained why he wanted his staff to join in the activity instead of just financing the event. He felt that he and his staff will benefit by interacting with the psoriasis patients, and by listening to our needs and expectations.

Dr Colin Theng, president of PAS, spoke about how our lifestyles can affect psoriasis. Stress, infections, trauma to the skin, cold and dry weather, smoking, medications and obesity are conditions that will negatively affect psoriasis. Hence, we should try to reduce stress, exercise regularly, have a healthy diet, avoid excessive alcohol intake, stop smoking, moisturise regularly, and avoid infections. We should also try to avoid scratching and rubbing the skin as trauma to the skin which can induce psoriasis.

The Duck Tour followed. The special vehicle is a remodeled WWII amphibious Vietnamese war craft that first goes on the road, then glide into the Kallang River. Our tour guide entertained us with information on our surroundings. He informed us that we were in the 18th reservoir in Singapore. He explained how the Marina Barrage works to prevent flooding, and other interesting facts along the way. From the ‘boat’, we saw the Singapore skyline, the Merlion, Singapore Flyer and the civic district.

After the tour, members enjoyed a bento box dinner and interacted with each other. The highlight of the evening was a peer sharing session. The moderator, Yanni, invited Dr Colin Theng, Ms Ily Yasmin and Ms Charlene Yeong to the stage. Both Ily and Charlene are in their early twenties, and both have psoriasis since the age of 13 and 14 respectively. They shared how they had to dress conservatively to hide their ‘problems’ and went through many types of treatments, something which most psoriasis patients can identify with. However, they both overcame their timidity and became ‘activists’ to help as many people understand this condition as possible. For her school project, Charlene came up with the idea of helping psoriasis patients on how to choose fashionable clothing. Ily is trying to self treat her psoriasis for the time being.

We thank the volunteer students from Hwa Cheong Junior College, our sponsor AbbVie, the committee members and all participants for a successful and enjoyable time. *- Written by John Koh*

Hello! I’m Kah Jun, one of the five members of Project Aurelia, a project that aims to raise awareness about psoriasis in Singapore. We recently took part in “Ride On , Breaking The Stigma “ an activity organized by the PAS. We felt that the activity was fun, educational and meaningful as we enjoyed ourselves a great deal. We also learnt a lot about psoriasis and the struggles that patients often face.

One of the highlights of the programme was the panel sharing , where the panelists shared with us their struggles with psoriasis growing up and how psoriasis would cause them to feel self-conscious and they would cover themselves up at times to hide the disease. At the same time, they also shared how they overcame this struggles and learnt to live with psoriasis which was very inspiring.

They also shared that one of the major problems about living with psoriasis is the lack of awareness about the disease itself, thus they would be afraid about being judged by the public. We feel that this is one of the areas that we as the public can improve on, i.e. having more awareness about the disease , so that we can actually learn to accept patients that suffer from the disease and not shun them for their appearance. This is one of the aspects our project would also like to work on, to raise awareness about psoriasis so that more people can learn to accept the patients for who they are.

Overall, we have really learnt a lot from this event , and we are extremely grateful for the opportunity to interact with the psoriasis patients on a first hand basis so that we can learn about their struggles on a more personal level. We also hope that more patients can learn from the panellists and learn to be confident in themselves!

Cheers,
Project Aurelia 2017

Duck tour on 8 April 2017 Written by Hannah Ho

Project “Ride On, Breaking the Stigma” was held on the 8th of April 2017 at Suntec Convention Centre. The afternoon began with a flurry of photograph taking of patients and organizers from the Psoriasis Association of Singapore. I have to admit I felt like a professional photographer for that moment. The official programme kick started off by our two hilarious hosts, Sara and Joe, welcoming Dr Colin Theng and Mr How up on stage for their respective welcome speeches. After a brief insight on the linkage between our daily habits and psoriasis by Dr Colin as well as Mr How’s overview on AbbVie’s support for today’s event, we headed off for the long awaited Duck Tour.

After the ride, we filled our stomachs with the bento meals while listening to the panel of patients sharing their experiences. It was an interesting discussion from the young patients who opened up about the struggles they face as a psoriasis patient. I’m glad to see young people speaking up and raising greater awareness about psoriasis in our society which is the main objective of this project, “Ride On, Breaking the Stigma”.

This programme was a great platform for the team from AbbVie to get into the shoes of the patients by having the chance to interact with the patients themselves. This really gave the team a clearer view as we plan for the year ahead to make an impact on more patients’ lives.



Public Forum on “How to Maximise my Doctor’s Visit – Tips from a Doctor”

By Alastair Liew, Anglo-Chinese School (Independent)

On the 20th of May 2017, Dr Hazel Oon, Deputy Head of the Psoriasis Unit at National Skin Centre gave a talk entitled “How to maximize my doctor’s visit – Tips from a doctor.”



The clinic visit for a psoriasis consultation needs to cover a lot of ground including the diagnosis, treatment and comorbidities, in a short span of time. It is important to realise that the doctor-patient visit involves not just one but two parties: the patient and doctor. Family members or close friends who accompany the patient may also be involved. A useful mnemonic to help maximise the visit would be the 5 W’s (Who, What, When, Where, Why) and 1 H (How).

Who- is the person seeing the patient on this visit? The goals of the consultation are different if the consultation is given by a general practitioner, dermatologist, rheumatologist or other specialists as they cover different scopes. If allied health professionals such as the medical social worker or phototherapy nurse need to be seen, make sure to prepare items such as financial documents, phototherapy goggles and kit. If family members or helpers are assisting in administering medication or applying creams, ideally they should accompany the patient during the visit.

What- refers to the diagnosis, treatment options and items to bring along to the consultation. This may entail some ‘homework,’ such as bringing along past records and test reports, referring to support groups and writing down the names of medications that the patient is currently taking.

When – it is important to note down the time of the appointment. With a busy schedule, this can easily be overlooked. It is also

important to come early for the necessary blood tests such as the full blood count, liver function tests and renal function as the laboratory results may require an hour or so to be ready.

Where – psoriasis may be located in sensitive sites such as the armpits, buttocks, groin or scalp. Physicians may overlook these sites as they are covered by clothing or hair. Do alert your doctor if you require attention to psoriasis affecting these areas or if your joints are affected. Aching or swollen joints may be a sign of psoriatic arthritis.

Why – seeking the reason on why the treatment seem not to be working. These include too short a duration of treatment (oral medications may take 2-3 months to see the effect) or forgetting to take the medication.

Lastly, the ‘How’- is particularly important. How can we improve the quality of our visit to the doctor? Engage with the doctors actively and provide them with updates on any new developments with the disease such as hospital admissions, change in blood pressure or your medications. Be aware of the normal routine i.e. taking a blood test before you see your doctor for a check up to save time.

In conclusion, we should work together closely with our doctors and seek help if we are unclear about the diagnosis or treatment. Prepare questions before your appointment. It is best to write them down. It takes two hands to clap, so ensure that not only your doctor, but you yourself should play an active part. Working with your doctor will ensure a more satisfying outcome to your consultation visits to your doctor. Psoriasis is a long journey and we learn something new every step of the way.

After the presentation, Dr Oon presented the Psoriasis Association members with a bottle of red wine.

