

## Celebrating WHO Resolution...Creating #PsorFREE moments



Patient, Ray Chua sharing his sentiments on psoriasis and its impact on his life.

On 9 May 2014, the WHO adopted a resolution on psoriasis. To celebrate this important milestone and heighten awareness on psoriasis being part of this global agenda, LEO Pharma initiated a regional #PsorFREE Moments awareness campaign within Asia. The aim is to drive the notion of living and re-creating #PsorFREE moments, because every patient deserves to live a liberated life from psoriasis, and we are committed to partner with patient associations and healthcare providers to provide the needed solutions in making this happen.

To generate awareness on the WHO resolution, Psoriasis patients Ray Chua and Doris Tan were invited to share their psoriasis journey from the start to present, focusing on the impact on them, and losing out on the precious moments in their lives. PAS President, Dr Colin Theng also shared on his perspective of psoriasis from a medical provider's angle, and his sentiments echoed with that of the patients.



PAS President, Dr Colin Theng sharing on his perspective as a healthcare provider.

However, with the adoption of the resolution by WHO, there is enhanced focus on de-stigmatizing psoriasis. The video also features the hope that both patient and Dr have with this adoption and their refined outlook for psoriasis patients in the day ahead, with this new hope.

The video has been translated into several languages and aired across Asia including China, Korea, Thailand, Malaysia. There were rippling effects on some of these countries in making the best out of this resolution and we're positive there's more to come in the days ahead.

To encourage patients to re-live their #PsorFREE moments, a regional photo competition was also launched across Asia, inviting patients to submit pictures depicting these moments. A winning picture was selected for each country. On World Psoriasis Day itself, participants were invited to visit the booth to capture their #PsorFREE moments.

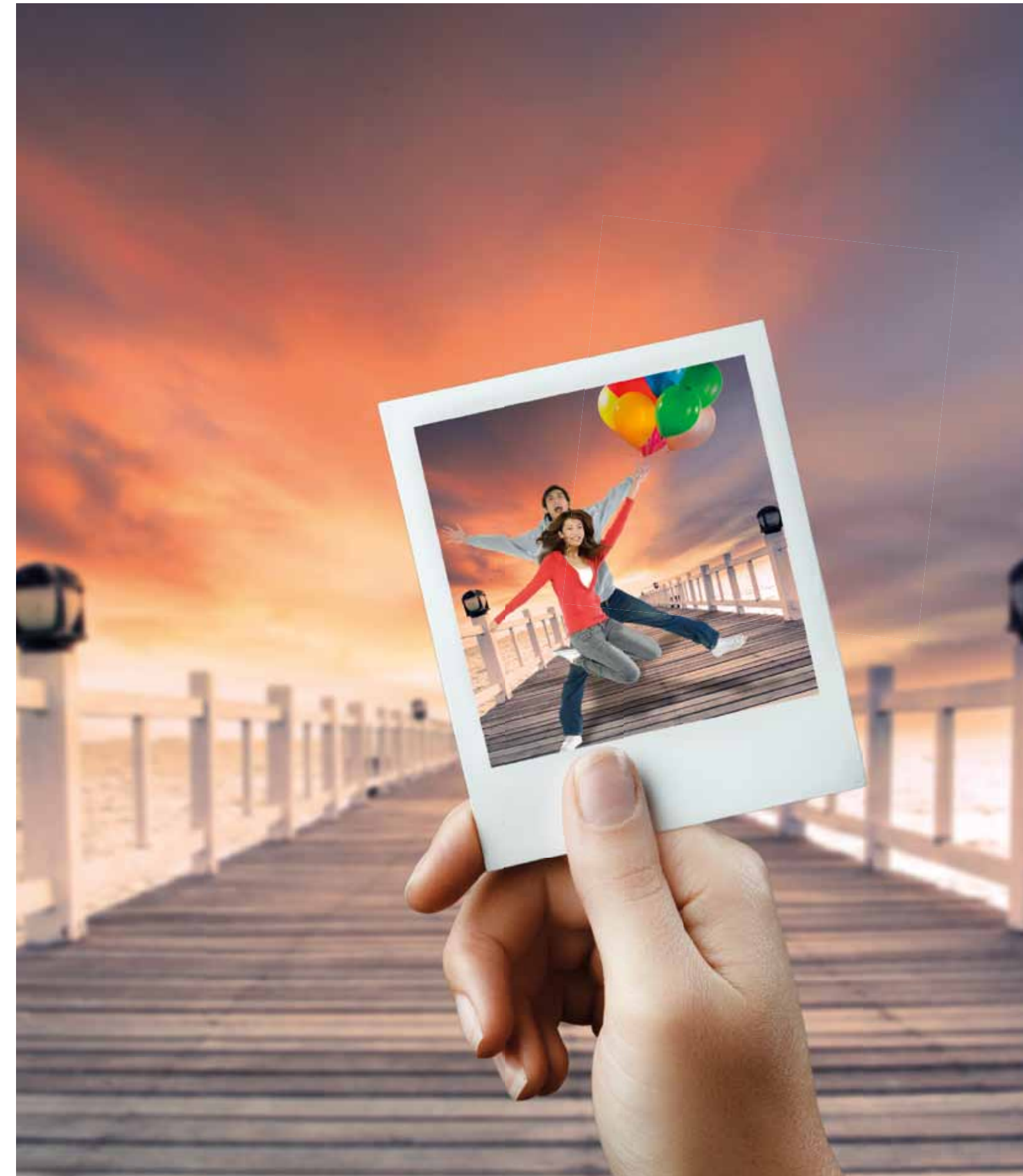
Bentley Tan's picture was selected as the winning entry from Singapore. He won a polaroid camera but has kindly donated it back to PAS. PAS thank Bentley for his magnanimous gesture and hope that this token serves as a reminder that precious moments should never be compromised due to psoriasis.



Bentley striking a confident pose at the photo booth NTU students



Medical students Dr Theng and PAS warriors having fun at the photo booth



Helping *people* living with psoriasis.



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living well with psoriasis

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### President's Message

It is the end of the year again and I wish one and all a very blessed Christmas and New Year ahead. I think this has been an important year for psoriasis. As you may know, psoriasis has been recognized by the World Health Organization in May this year as a serious non-contagious disease. With this recognition, I am sure the awareness of psoriasis in Singapore and around the world will be heightened in the coming years.

We had successfully commemorated the World Psoriasis Day in Oct this year. As I was out in the streets conducting the public survey on psoriasis, I was glad to have met a few members of the public who were very knowledgeable about the disease. One lady in particular impressed me as she seemed to know all the right answers to the questions asked and accepted the condition without prejudice. When I asked her how she knew so much about psoriasis, she said that she had learnt it from a colleague who has psoriasis and they get along well together. I think for those of you who have psoriasis, you are an important ambassador for the disease. Instead of fearing to let those around you know that you have psoriasis, you should willingly share with them about the cause and non-contagious nature of the disease. In doing so, you can make a difference in psoriasis awareness in Singapore and gain acceptance at the same time.

Once again, I wish you all the very best in the year to come!

God bless.

*Colin Theng*



## My thoughts on World Psoriasis Day-A NTU Volunteer's perspective by Benjamin Tang

On the 18th of October, Volunteer Management (VM) of Nanyang Technological University (NTU) took part in a campaign organized by the Psoriasis Association of Singapore to celebrate World Psoriasis Day. The campaign started from Scape from where the volunteers hit the streets around Orchard Road to promote awareness of psoriasis. Due to the physical manifestations of the disease on their skin, psoriasis patients are

often misunderstood and discriminated. There are about 40,000 psoriasis sufferers in Singapore, and due to misconceptions many suffer in silence. Hence, the aim of the campaign was to raise awareness about this chronic skin condition through a simple questionnaire.

The event included a finale concert that highlighted the struggles faced by the community through song and dance renditions of

“The Psoriasis Man”, an original composition by a psoriasis patient, Ray and sung by Ray and Dr. Theng. The Spring Chorale also took the chance to play its part by performing popular songs about acceptance, hope and love. Volunteers actively sought out passersby to answer the short questionnaire, to tell them about psoriasis and to encourage awareness of this group of psoriasis sufferers that the society should know more about.

## My thoughts on World Psoriasis Day...A nurse's perspective by Mabel Leow

It is the first time I joined the World Psoriasis Day which was held on 18th Oct 2014. There were many meaningful initiatives such as the public outreach “storming session”, art auction to raise funds for the Psoriasis Association, and posting on instagram #pSingapore to create awareness on Psoriasis.

I was delegated to help out in the storming session, which aimed to help create public awareness on psoriasis. It was heart-warming to see healthcare professionals from all disciplines, and University students going out together with a common goal of educating the

public on psoriasis. Not very surprisingly, the majority of those we surveyed in the public have not heard about psoriasis much less know about this chronic skin condition. People who had any knowledge about psoriasis were those who knew someone living with it. Personally, I did not hear the name ‘Psoriasis’ until I worked in the National Skin Centre (NSC). After the survey, the ‘hugging’ were given a teddy bear with the to promote the notion of ‘hugging’ a psoriasis patients, driving awareness on the non-contagious nature of it.

After the storming session, we were treated to a sumptuous buffet lunch followed by song and dance to entertain the guests. I was most impressed by the song “Psoriasis Man” composed by Dr Colin Theng and Ray, a member of the Psoriasis group. The most memorable line in the song was “**They know superman, spider man, but they do not know the psoriasis man**”. This gave me a greater insight on the emotions people with psoriasis and how they are often shunned by the society. Indeed, the “Psoriasis Man” is an unsung hero in their daily lives.

## My thoughts on World Psoriasis Day... A medical student's perspective by Chua Shun Jie

To wear our favorite swimwear to the beach, to put on a singlet for a jog at the botanic gardens or to put on a summer wear for a walk down the shopping alley is something most of us do without much thought, but these are just things which many psoriasis patients are not be able to do. With rashes of salmon pink and silvery flakes occurring on prominent body parts of the body, public attention is drawn easily to people with psoriasis. Psoriasis patients often face social ostracism as many people believe that psoriasis is infectious and contagious and this reduces their quality of life. Public awareness of the condition can greatly help improve the patients' lives

Medical School and NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine joined other healthcare professionals and patients to promote a better understanding of the condition among members of the public.

For this, mixed teams of participants went to designated locations at bus stops and MRT stations to “Storm” the public. The participants distributed leaflets and inform the public about psoriasis. It was hoped that the “Storm” would wash away psoriasis myths and allow the public to have more knowledge and understanding of psoriasis. The students enjoyed the interaction with the public greatly.

Chua Shunjie said, “The public interaction component was interesting for students as it provided an experience which we were unable to obtain in the textbooks and clinics. It was really useful to be able to communicate about the condition in different languages

with the public. This would definitely help us to care for patients in the future.”

The chance to be able to interact with the patients in the groups was also enlightening. Rayson felt that, “He was able to apply his knowledge into dealing with patients. He has learnt a lot about the condition from the patients and some details of patient management which he had not heard of in the past.”

While many students had learned about psoriasis as a topic through their textbooks, this was the first time students had the chance to interact with members of the public and to help them understand psoriasis. This participation in World Psoriasis Day celebration offered the students a golden opportunity to acquire new skills, increase their understanding and get a holistic view of psoriasis.

## Learning beyond the classroom: International Friendship Day by Alastair Liew

Nanyang Primary School commemorated International Friendship Day on 7 April 2014. International Friendship Day was started to encourage government agencies, organizations and the community to hold communal events to foster mutual understanding. Winnie the Pooh was the designated ambassador of friendship because he is a fine example of a true friend and he embodies the spirit of camaraderie. This year, the theme for Singapore is “Stories We Share”.

and friends from Nanyang Primary School. I was one of the selected pupils who shared our stories during Assembly and hosted an exhibition in school.

I shared about an event in which I made many friends. That occasion was the World Psoriasis Day. This was an annual get-together for patients with psoriasis. Psoriasis is a skin disease whereby red, flaky rashes appear on the body. My brothers and I set up a Lego and Halloween Challenge booth at the event. Our booth attracted many people and both children and adults alike enjoyed playing our

games. As some patients had swollen, painful joints from psoriatic arthritis and difficulty manipulating the smaller Lego pieces, we included some larger Lego Duplo pieces to allow them greater ease in playing the games. Many of the participants expressed their creative ideas and built beautiful flowers, cars and houses using the Lego bricks.

In summary, International Friendship Day is an important reminder to us that we can be friends to many people around the world. Friendship should be forever.

## Celebrating World Psoriasis Day...Media outreach by Ray Chua

To commemorate the 10th Anniversary of World Psoriasis Awareness Day, the Psoriasis Association of Singapore, in conjunction with very supportive sponsors, Viz., Abbvie, Janssen and Leo Pharma, put together a series of events, awareness videos, and an ongoing social media campaign to create awareness for psoriasis.

The media blitz were done through the local English and Mandarin newspapers, a local radio station, YouTube and Facebook advertisements to promote awareness of psoriasis in collaboration with several partners. Together with Rufus Varghese and Dr Colin Theng, I wrote a song called, “The Psoriasis Man”. The song was performed at the World Psoriasis Day concert and dramatized in a music video created for the purpose of psoriasis awareness.

Local celebrity YouTube personalities well known to Singaporeans such as Dr Jiajia, Wah Banana and others also helped to promote the campaign.

In alignment with the theme, “Help build a better world for people with psoriasis”, our awareness campaign emphasized

on the message - “Psoriasis is NOT contagious” and was aimed at the public at large. As part of the publicity blitz, on 18th October 2014, 60 volunteers and psoriasis patients went to the MRT (Underground Train) stations in Singapore to give away bears while doing surveys and spreading the word that psoriasis is not contagious.

As a psoriasis patient and an active member in the Psoriasis Association of Singapore, I am truly touched by the effort, time and resources put in by all involved, to pull such a massive and ongoing drive to help de-stigmatize the condition through educating the public.

The battle to have the condition understood by the public and not to have psoriasis discriminated against is a challenging one. It is encouraging that we are not giving up. One day, even before the cure is found, my simple wish is that all psoriasis patients like myself will be able to live normal lives, sitting, eating and working alongside other normal people, enjoying a fulfilling and happy long life while managing psoriasis with the help of all health care practitioners.



### Patients seek to educate public on skin disease

Singaporean Ray Chua is often shamed in public as he often checks his skin for discoloration in a local bathhouse before he goes. He has developed the skin disease known as psoriasis, an incurable condition affecting about 1 per cent of Singaporeans, which he was 31.

### Patients seek to educate public on skin disease

Ray Chua said he had prepared himself for the bad news of attention and the wide media publicity. He said he had already seen the news on TV and in newspapers. He said he had already seen the news on TV and in newspapers. He said he had already seen the news on TV and in newspapers.

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## What we see in life is different from what it seems by Jerome

We cannot control some things in life but we can choose the path we want to take. A path we believe will give us a brighter future. As we cannot predict what life will bring, we should not allow situations to stop you from moving forward and to try to achieve your dreams.

I want to thank the Psoriasis Association of Singapore and Abbvie for the opportunity to participate in this project of using art as therapy.

Recently I was lucky to be involved with the project organized by Abbvie whereby I was to share my feelings about having psoriasis with an art student who is supposed to reflect my feelings on to a canvas.

I arrived at the place one fine Saturday. It was a new location to me and there were many new faces. It was a new event with an unknown outcome. I felt a sense of fear as well as excitement of a new adventure. I only noticed the familiar sight of the food on the buffet table. I heard introductory talks on the illness and I learned with fear of the possibility that prevention is the only way I can manage it.

I began to share my feelings about the disease with a stranger. Strangely, it is different from sharing it with a doctor. We tend to talk a bit more about the frustrations and doubts about future of this illness and my own life – the persistence of the illness and the roller-coaster emotions that goes with it.

I shed tears talking about the difficult path and the endurance necessary for the journey. I released my frustrations of having to keep silent and to conceal my affliction. I would personally call it fireworks of anger with the discovery of a rainbow when you begin to understand and discover yourself. I realized that I have to accept the negative aspects of the disease in order to see the positive aspects of the tough life ahead and how I have to adjust and press ahead.

When we met the second time, the rapport was obvious. It was as if we had known each other for a long time. We laughed and the awkwardness dissipated. When we shared the video clip of previous interviews, I felt such a sense of relief. I realize that sharing was not a wasteful effort and I am glad I had the opportunity to share my feelings with another person.

Some patients are able to face the pain of their illness and struggle with a lot of courage and humour. Yes, many of us must and can endure and cope with a lot of difficulties in the face of a most difficult illness. It is difficult, but we can do it.



Interview with Jerome.



Art pieces from 'Perspectives' up for bidding during World Psoriasis day



Group appreciation at Perspectives art gallery