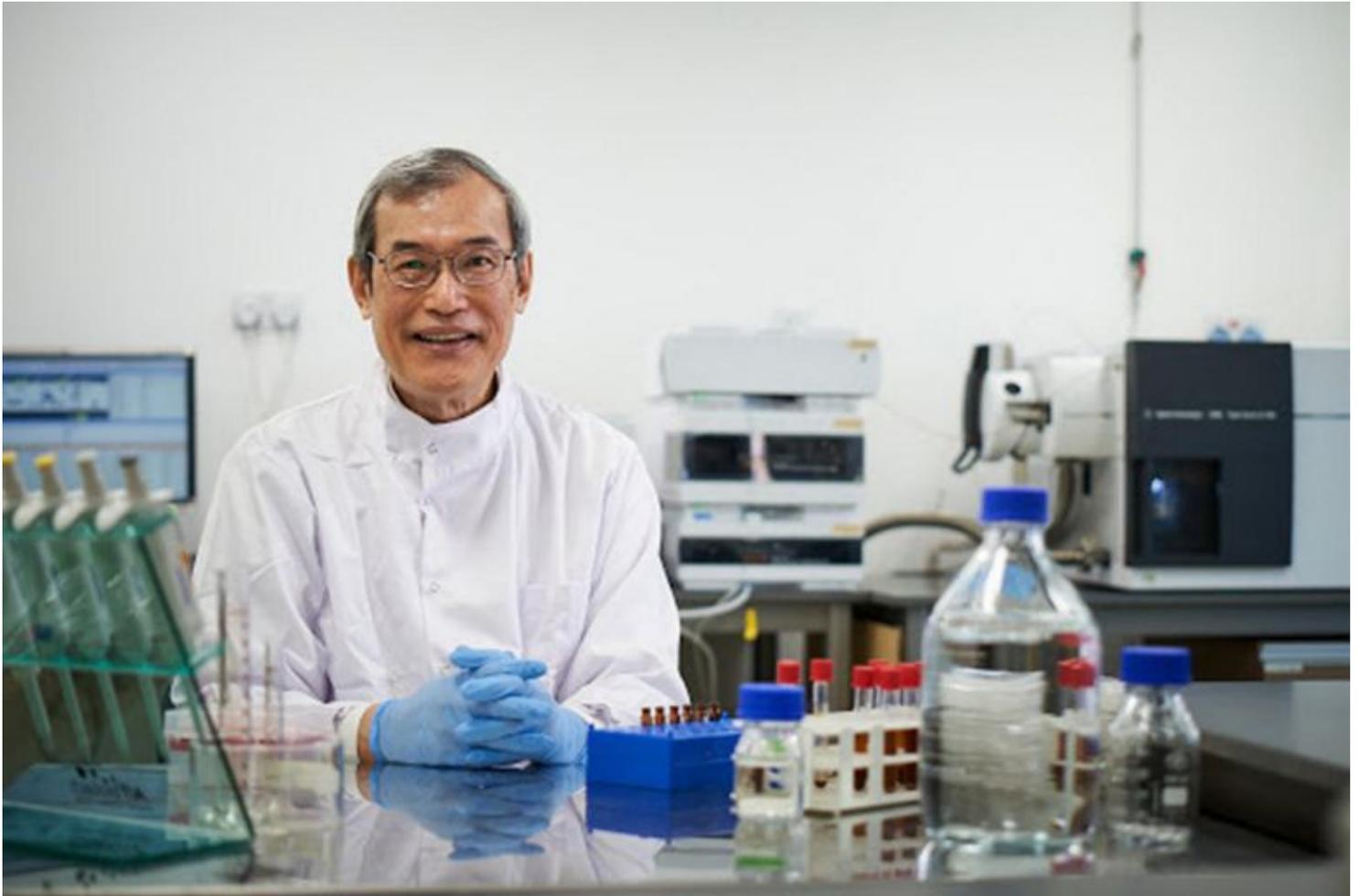


Veteran clinicians and mentors celebrated in this year's medical excellence awards



Professor Yong Eu Leong, winner of the National Outstanding Clinician Scientist Award. PHOTO: NATIONAL UNIVERSITY HEALTH SYSTEM (NUHS)



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SINGAPORE - An obstetrician and gynaecologist for over 30 years, Professor Yong Eu Leong has delivered thousands of babies.

He has also attended to whatever problems the mothers experienced after giving birth and through their middle age.

This spurred him to further study women's health. In 2014, he started the Integrated Women's Health Programme - a unique study focused on key health concerns of mid-life Singaporean women: menopause, osteoporosis, anxiety, depression, pre-diabetes, pre-hypertension, urinary incontinence, poor sleep and hip fractures.

Prof Yong's outstanding research in women's health and human fertility won him the National Outstanding Clinician Scientist Award, one of six awards given out by the Health Ministry on Thursday (Oct 29) as part of the National Medical Excellence Awards (NMEA).

The NMEA recognise the efforts of outstanding clinicians, clinician scientists and other healthcare professionals. This year's awards went to five individuals and a team.

In an interview on Wednesday, Prof Yong, a senior consultant at the department of obstetrics and gynaecology at the National University Hospital, said: "After menopause, oestrogen levels drop suddenly, increasing the risk of osteoporosis and hip fractures. A study in 2002, however, also showed that hormone replacement therapy - the giving of oestrogen to women after menopause - resulted in slightly higher risk of stroke and blood clotting."

"But I think there is a way to give oestrogen safely and this is something which I'm writing an editorial review on. When women reach menopause, they should be given an option to continue with oestrogen at a lower level. But this is still sufficient to keep skin healthy, bones protected, not have urinary problems and have sexual intercourse that isn't painful. Oestrogen can then be slowly tailed off at age 55 to 60, and this prevents a sudden drop in hormone levels," Prof Yong explained.



Associate Professor Keson Tan grades students' work in the simulation lab. PHOTO: NATIONAL UNIVERSITY HEALTH SYSTEM

NUHS also bagged another award, with Associate Professor Keson Tan from the NUS Faculty of Dentistry and National University Centre for Oral Health, Singapore, winning the National Outstanding Clinician Mentor Award.

Serving as dean of the faculty from 2001 to 2009 and programme director of the Graduate Prosthodontics Residency Training Programme since 2001, Prof Tan is passionate about mentoring dentistry students as well as expanding the field of knowledge in Prosthodontics - otherwise known as prosthetic dentistry.

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Prof Tan continues to keep in touch with students from the residency programme even after they graduate, supporting them in their careers.

"I always stress to my students the importance of forming a relationship with the patient, to look at them holistically and follow up with them over time, instead of focusing on just treating the symptoms. And this is the philosophy which the whole school adopts," Prof Tan said.

Meanwhile, Associate Professor Sum Chee Fang, a senior consultant at the division of endocrinology in Khoo Teck Puat Hospital (KTPH), took home the National Outstanding Clinician Award.



Associate Professor Sum Chee Fang took home the National Outstanding Clinician Award. PHOTO: KHOO TECK PUAT HOSPITAL

Prof Sum has over three decades of experience as a physician and endocrinologist. He helped set up the National Healthcare Group's (NHG) diabetes registry that proved to be a valuable databank in helping to monitor and improve diabetes management within NHG.

A pioneer in setting up the diabetes centre in Alexandra Hospital in 2001, Prof Sum also initiated the Advanced Practice Nurse Programme at the diabetes centre in KTPH, which allowed these nurses to prescribe diabetes medications for patients under clinician supervision.

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"I think what often occupies my mind is how best to care for patients in terms of how best to manage the medical problems of individual patients; and from my perspective as a doctor looking after people with diabetes, how best to organise the care around them," Prof Sum said to The Straits Times.

"I am ever grateful to the outstanding team members I work with in Admiralty Medical Centre as well as colleagues in KTPH and other healthcare institutions. This award recognises their great contributions."

The NHG also clinched another award, with Associate Professor Nicholas Chew winning the National Outstanding Clinician Educator Award. Prof Chew, who is the group chief education officer at NHG, played a pivotal role in establishing the NHG residency programme in 2009.

He was also instrumental in the development of a new training model for Postgraduate Year 1 medical students with the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education-International in 2010.

"I am humbled to receive this award. It does not recognise my work alone, but also acknowledges the contributions of my mentors, colleagues and fellow educators in the vital role of educating the next generation of healthcare professionals," Prof Chew said.

"Being able to grow a team of faculty and administrators dedicated to help our students and residents receive quality learning and training experience has been a memorable part of my journey so far. But what I am most proud of is seeing our

students and residents grow and develop to become colleagues with whom I now manage patients with, and even seek advice from," he added.

Other winners are Dr Chow Mun Hong from SingHealth Polyclinics, who won the National Outstanding Clinical Quality Champion Award, and a team from KK Women's and Children's Hospital who won the National Clinical Excellence Team Award for their contributions in establishing a national donor human milk bank programme to benefit premature and critically-ill babies in Singapore.



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