

# ACE INSIGHTS

Driving better decision-making in healthcare

## A note from Executive Director



As ACE turns 5 this month and with the COVID-19 situation limiting face-to-face interactions, we felt that this would be an opportune moment to launch ACE's e-bulletin which aims to keep clinicians and healthcare administrators up to date on ACE's activities and plans.

This inaugural issue provides links to seven drug and device evaluations that ACE has recently conducted, an introduction to ACE CUES, our new one-to-one information service to keep healthcare professionals updated on specific therapeutic areas, as well as a section on ACE's contributions to the national COVID-19 efforts.

Our mission is to provide up to date, accurate and objective evidence-based evaluations to support 3 key groups – policy-makers, healthcare providers and patients. ACE would also like to take this opportunity to thank DMS and MOH senior management, MOHH, our Chairman and Council, the International Advisory Panel, members of our key committees as well as all other clinicians and others who have supported us in our work. A warm thanks also goes to all our staff who have travelled with us on this exciting journey.

**DR DAPHNE KHOO**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ACE  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL SERVICES,  
HEALTHCARE PERFORMANCE GROUP, MOH

**? DID YOU KNOW**  
ACE will be turning **5** in August 2020



(Note: Photo was taken before safe distancing measures and the use of masks were mandated)



## Foreword from DMS

ACE was established five years ago with the aim to improve patient outcomes and to drive change in our healthcare system, focusing on the delivery of value-based care.

Since its inception, ACE has effectively supported policy-makers in making informed funding and subsidy decisions for health technologies, as well as provided healthcare providers with recommendations and guidelines on the appropriate use of health technologies, tests and therapies. I congratulate them on the progress that they have made in this short five years. They have accomplished much in their efforts to help create a sustainable healthcare system for all Singaporeans. I am confident that ACE will continue to strive for excellence and help us to improve patients' access to clinically effective and affordable healthcare.

The work of ACE has continued despite the challenges of dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic in Singapore. In the seven months since our first COVID-19 case was diagnosed, we have mounted a Whole of Nation effort to fight against the virus and this novel infectious disease. Many ministries and agencies have had to step forward to contribute their resources and collaborate in this fight. We have also seen new public-private sector partnerships being forged to support the work of the taskforce. Our staff in ACE have been deployed in many different roles within the COVID-19 taskforce and have had to also continue with some of the normal duties. It has been tiring and stressful work. I thank all of you for your sterling effort and your commitment to doing the best you can in challenging circumstances. It matters not whether you were deployed to the frontline in direct clinical care and patient-facing roles, or whether you were engaged in work in the background to support others in the frontline. Each of you contributed in a significant way to making our COVID-19 fight a success.

On behalf of MOH, I wish to take the opportunity to thank all of you for your work and contributions. Let us stand together in solidarity, unshaken and resilient in spirit, united in our commitment as one healthcare family to safeguard the health and welfare of all in Singapore.

Keep Safe, Keep Strong, and Keep Healthy.



**A/P KENNETH MAK**  
DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL SERVICES (DMS)  
MINISTRY OF HEALTH,  
SINGAPORE



Watch MOH's tribute to healthcare workers here

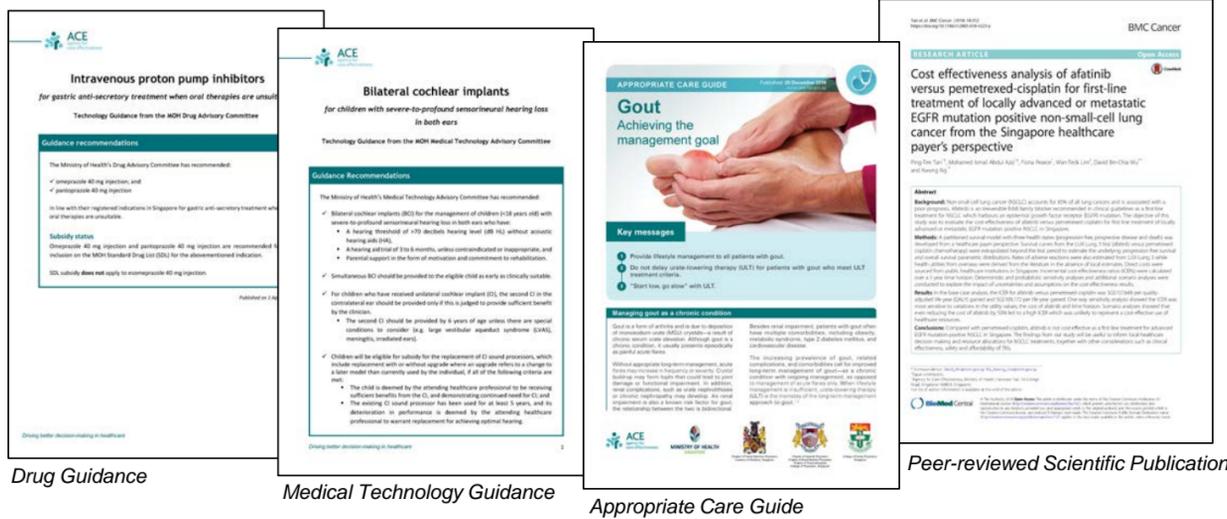
We thank our following healthcare partners for photo contributions:

- ♥ Agency for Integrated Care (AIC)
- ♥ Bright Hill Evergreen Home
- ♥ College of Family Physicians Singapore (CFPS)
- ♥ Sengkang General Hospital (SKH)
- ♥ Singapore Health Services (SingHealth)

# What's been keeping ACE busy over the last 5 years?

Looking back at the past five years' achievements, these are all results of the combined efforts of every individual who has been with us on the journey.

- Assisted MOH policy-makers in making funding and subsidy decisions for drugs and medical technologies
- Published >60 guidances on the appropriate use of health technologies and clinical practice to support doctors and patients to make informed decisions in choosing treatment options
- Through negotiations with manufacturers, ACE improved access and affordability for over 50,000 patients by reducing the prices of medicines such as those for diabetes and Hepatitis C by 50% or more



Drug Guidance

Medical Technology Guidance

Appropriate Care Guide



Peer-reviewed Scientific Publication

## Spotlight

ACE will be launching a national educational visiting service called ACE Clinical Update Service (CUES) in the latter part of 2020.

### What is ACE CUES?

While educational visiting may be a new term to many, it has been available in a number of countries, including Australia, the United States, Canada, and Norway. Educational visiting has been shown to improve patient care and outcomes.

In educational visiting, best available evidence and information materials on patient care are brought to healthcare professionals at their workplace, through one-to-one, focused, and customised discussions to address their practice needs. Keeping to COVID-19 precautions, ACE CUES will provide online discussions in place of face-to-face visits to begin with.

### Support for healthcare professionals and better patient outcomes

#### ACE Clinical Update Service for healthcare professionals in second half of 2020

- Individualised, face-to-face discussions which will provide best available evidence and information materials on patient care
- Access to useful resources such as those that assist in explaining health conditions or treatment options to patients



Covering a range of clinical topics over time, ACE CUES will be offered to general practitioners (GPs) on a free-subscription basis. The service may be extended to other healthcare professionals in the future. The first clinical topic is asthma management, focusing on major recent developments in the approach to treating this chronic respiratory condition.

## ACE News

Partner with ACE to plug care gaps! Hear what our doctors in **diabetes management** have to say.

Scan the QR code to find out more.



<https://go.gov.sg/partnering-ace>



<https://go.gov.sg/ace-guidances>

ACE has **new drug and medical technology guidances** on the following groups of medical conditions:

- Gastrointestinal
- Respiratory
- Cardiovascular
- Infections
- Urological
- Ear, Nose & Throat
- Endocrine & Metabolic

Scan the QR code or visit [www.ace-hta.gov.sg](http://www.ace-hta.gov.sg)

Curious about the **process and methods of health technology assessment (HTA)** ACE employed to drive better decision-making in healthcare?

Check out this video to find out more.



<https://go.gov.sg/hta-process>

## Standing in solidarity to combat COVID-19 as one healthcare family

To deal with a pandemic like COVID-19 requires agility and a united front. MOH co-chairs the Multi-Ministry Taskforce on COVID-19 and plays a key role in coordinating the Whole-of-Government responses to combat COVID-19. Staff from across public agencies have also been mobilised to support the efforts, which include the expanded scope of contact tracing. At MOH, various divisions such as Communicable Diseases, Hospital Services, Primary & Community Care, Ageing Planning Office are on constant alert to promptly issue circulars and directives to guide healthcare institutions and healthcare workers in their daily work.



MOTF CC was manned in shifts by 70 pilots, cabin crew, medical students and MOH staff (Photo credit: MOTF CC)

A Medical Operations Task Force Call Centre (MOTF CC) was set up to support MOH in managing suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases, including coordinating non-emergency dedicated medical conveyances for these patients to and from hospitals or isolation facilities.

A comprehensive medical strategy was established to ensure that individuals infected with COVID-19 receive prompt and quality medical treatment. A tactical plan has been put in place to transfer patients into appropriate tiered facilities for medical care and support; ramp up healthcare capacity through collaborations between the public-private hospitals, and augment the healthcare manpower through the formation of SG Healthcare Corps. An Inter-Agency Task Force has been set up to systematically and progressively clear dormitories through aggressive testing of foreign workers residing in them to ensure that the workers are well and can safely resume work.

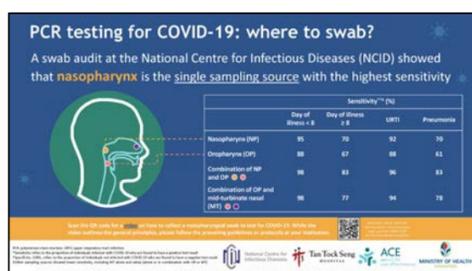
## Keeping the conversation going between MOH, medical experts and COVID-19 healthcare frontliners

ACE has undertaken efforts to support MOH in its communication to healthcare professionals. One such activity involved organising a series of webinars hosted by A/Prof Kenneth Mak, DMS of MOH. The aim was to have open dialogues between the Ministry, medical experts and healthcare professionals, to help address feedback and clarify COVID-19 related medical issues that healthcare professionals working at the frontline had. The Q&A segment also provided opportunities for MOH to explain the rationale of the advisories that have been issued thus far.



Webinar with CFPS (Note: Photo was taken before safe distancing measures and the use of masks were mandated)

Different healthcare professional groups including all three public healthcare clusters (Singapore Health Services (SingHealth), National Healthcare Group (NHG) and National University Health System (NUHS)), Intermediate, & Long-Term Care (ILTC) Institutions and general practitioners, had their independent webinars with DMS, Directors from MOH and other infectious diseases experts from National Centre for Infectious Diseases (NCID) and NUHS. Topics covered under the webinars were customised to target respective groups of healthcare professionals. These ranged from case definition to testing strategies and capacity, institutional capability building for isolation of cases, and the development of vaccines. The webinars were well received by healthcare professionals from across the healthcare sector.



Infographic developed to support healthcare workers in performing nasopharyngeal swabs



Sample of CES review



Scan for more COVID-19 resources

## Supporting policies with evidence

ACE has been actively contributing to the battle against COVID-19 with staff applying their core capabilities and skillsets to support MOH's efforts. In particular, various teams within ACE responded swiftly to urgent calls for updated evidence for decision-making on various aspects related to COVID-19.

Using a streamlined process, Clinical Evidence Summaries (CES) on request or on topics identified by our own teams, were published in under 48 hours. Such speed is required to keep up with the pandemic situation involving the novel virus around which evidence is accumulating and evolving rapidly, with a large number of new studies and reports published every day.

ACE updates the public healthcare institutions, National Pharmacy and Therapeutics (NPT) Committee, Singapore Medical Association (SMA) and Pharmaceutical Society of Singapore (PSS) each time new reviews are published. CES are also available for the public to access at MOH and ACE websites. Beyond therapeutic options, ACE also reviews non-pharmaceutical interventions such as social distancing.