Parkway Shenton: Teamwork reaps success

Dr Yim Heng Boon says hard work does pay

Parkway Pantai builds its first hospital in Hong Kong
Our job is to ensure your road to recovery leads back to the things you love

When choosing a hospital, it’s only natural to look for one that guarantees quality care, specialist expertise and proven technology. But we also believe that a hospital is nothing without its people. At Gleneagles, understanding our patients’ needs and building a trusting relationship with them is at the heart of our approach. After all, things always look better when we work on them together.
In March, Singapore commemorated the 10th anniversary of SARS. As people around the world remember the pain inflicted by the outbreak, we have not forgotten about the healthcare heroes who put their lives on the line as they battled the crisis.

At Parkway Pantai, we recognise the important role each healthcare worker and doctor plays in bringing quality healthcare to the countries and communities in which we operate. We acknowledge their contributions in our day-to-day routine and further engage them through employee town halls (pg 12), festive celebrations (pg 14) and staff activities (pg 34).

We believe our workforce is the foundation of our success, as the Group continues to expand in Asia with a new joint venture hospital in Hong Kong (pg 8), a soon-to-open new hospital in Ho Chi Minh City (pg 37) and a first-of-its-kind integrated wellness centre in Medini, Iskandar (pg 10).

Moving into the second quarter of 2013, World Health Day was celebrated on 7 April. The theme this year is high blood pressure, a condition which affects one in three adults worldwide today. Learn how you can keep hypertension at bay (pg 4) and other useful tips to stay in the pink of health.

Happy reading.

We want your feedback

Do you have an interesting story idea, news or happening you would like to share with us? Let us know and we will give you a special token of our appreciation. Write to: grpcorpcomm@parkway.sg, or Group Corporate Communications, Parkway Pantai Limited, #16-02, TripleOne Somerset, 111 Somerset Road, Singapore 238164.

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04
NEWS BITES
Bite-sized health news and tips

08
SPECIAL FEATURE
Parkway Pantai strengthens its presence in Hong Kong and Iskandar, Malaysia

12
SNAPSHOTS
Through the lens:
Events and happenings around Parkway Pantai

18
AT YOUR SERVICE
Parkway Shenton delivers a strong report card
Dr Yim Heng Boon divulges his secret to success
Get to know Dr Zul’s heartfelt passions

Global Leadership Award 2013 bestowed on Pantai Hospital Kuala Lumpur’s former CEO
Pantai Hospital Ipoh, Pantai Hospital Penang and Gleneagles Penang reach out to their communities
Pantai Hospital Kuala Lumpur celebrates their 39th anniversary
First-ever inter-hospital bowling tournament
City International Hospital gears up for its opening

Benefits of laparoscopy in gallbladder surgery

Crossing the 200th live donor transplant milestone: Asian Centre for Liver Diseases & Transplantation

Healthy, tasty and easy-to-do recipe
Reducing hypertension

Hypertension is a chronic medical condition in which blood pressure in the arteries is elevated. This takes a toll on the heart as it strains itself to circulate blood. To reduce hypertension, you can try the following tips.

Mind your diet
Reduce the amount of salt in your food and eat plenty of fruit and vegetables. Salt raises your blood pressure. The more salt you consume, the higher your blood pressure. Eating a low-fat diet that includes lots of fibre and plenty of fruit and vegetables is proven to help lower blood pressure.

Watch your weight
Being overweight forces your heart to work harder to pump blood around your body, which can raise your blood pressure. Losing a few kilograms will make a big difference to your blood pressure and overall health.

Limit your alcohol intake
Drinking too much alcohol can raise your blood pressure. To help prevent high blood pressure, men should limit alcoholic drinks to no more than two drinks a day and women should limit their alcohol intake to no more than a drink a day as women metabolise alcohol less efficiently than men.

Restrict your caffeine consumption
Drinking more than four cups of coffee a day may increase your blood pressure. If you are a big fan of coffee, tea or other caffeine-rich drinks, consider reducing your caffeine intake.

Exercise regularly
Being active and taking regular exercise lowers blood pressure by keeping your heart and blood vessels in good condition. Regular exercise can also help you lose weight, which will also help to lower blood pressure.

Quit smoking
Smoking puts you at much higher risk of a heart attack and stroke. Smoking will cause your arteries to narrow. If you smoke and have high blood pressure, your arteries will narrow much more quickly and your risk of a heart or lung disease in the future is dramatically increased.

Source: www.nhs.uk
Improve your memory

There is certainly a lot more information to commit to memory these days. Some days, we blame information overload for everyday memory lapses such as misplacing our glasses or walking into the office pantry only to forget what we needed there.

“There’s some truth to that,” says Gary Small, M.D., director of the Memory & Aging Research Center at University of California, Los Angeles. “Our lives may be more frenetic, but we simply need to work on improving our attention.”

Fortunately, research is yielding new ways to do that, to sharpen memory now and keep it strong as we get older.

Address your stress

Ever wonder why, when you are already having a maddening day, your memory worsens? Blame the stress hormone cortisol. When you are under stress, cortisol builds up in the hippocampus which is the brain’s control centre for learning and memory. The increase in cortisol may interfere with encoding information or retrieving it. Cumulatively, this can be serious. “As you get older, chronic elevated cortisol levels are linked to memory impairment and a smaller hippocampus,” says Shireen Sindi, a researcher in the Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery at McGill University.

Eat to your brain’s content

Foods that keep your heart healthy are also good for your brain. Sardines and salmon which are rich in omega-3 fatty acids fight artery-damaging inflammation. Blueberries are loaded with anthocyanins which are potent antioxidants that protect cells, including those in the brain. “Blueberries may also have the power to create new pathways for connection in the brain. These connectors tend to die off with age, but in animal studies, blueberry consumption has been shown to help restore them,” says Jim Joseph, Ph.D., director of the neuroscience lab at the USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging, Tufts University.

Take a walk

When you exercise, your brain gets a workout of its own. A new study of 161 adults aged 59 to 81 found that the hippocampus was larger in those who were physically active. “Fitness improvement leads to an increase in volume of this brain region,” explains Art Kramer, Ph.D., professor of psychology and neuroscience at the University of Illinois and co-author of the study. The bigger the hippocampus, the better able you are to form new memories. “You don’t have to live at the gym. Just get out and walk for an hour a few days a week,” says Kramer.

Play mind games

Doing something mentally challenging such as working on a crossword puzzle or learning an instrument creates fresh connections in your brain. “You can actually generate new cells in the hippocampus,” says Peter Snyder, Ph.D., professor of clinical neurosciences at the Warren Alpert School of Medicine at Brown University. Those new cells build cognitive reserves that are important for creating new memories and may protect against memory loss, even dementia, later in life. Games that work to improve processing speed may deliver an extra boost. In a group of older adults, his studies of the computer game Brain Fitness showed that players had a significant improvement in cognitive skills, including memory, compared with those in a control group.

Anything that requires working against the clock can help. A timed game like Boggle will force one to pay attention, work quickly and think flexibly. Source: GoodHouseKeeping.com
Five mental disorders share genetic links

The largest genetic study of mental illnesses to date finds five major disorders which are considered to be distinct, sharing some gene-based risks. The surprising discovery comes in the quest to unravel how psychiatric disorders are caused and how to better diagnose and treat them.

New findings suggest that the disorders — autism, attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder or ADHD, bipolar disorder, major depressive disorder and schizophrenia — are related in some way.

That has implications for learning how to diagnose mental illnesses with the same precision that physical illnesses are diagnosed, said Dr Bruce Cuthbert of the National Institute on Mental Health, which funded the research.

The Psychiatric Genomics Consortium, a collaboration of researchers in 19 countries, analysed the genomes of more than 61,000 people, of which some are with one of the five disorders and some without. They found four regions of the genetic code where variation was linked to all five disorders.

Of particular interest are disruptions in two specific genes that regulate the flow of calcium in brain cells, which affects how neurons signal each other.

The study offers a lead in the hunt for psychiatric treatments, said Dr Cuthbert. Drugs that affect calcium channels in other parts of the body are used for such conditions as high blood pressure, and scientists could explore whether they would be useful for psychiatric disorders as well.

Source: Associated Press

Diabetes raises birth defect risk

Pregnant women with diabetes are almost four times more likely to have a baby with a birth defect, according to research published in Diabetologica.

Experts found a higher risk of infants suffering serious problems if their mothers had Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes, compared with women without the condition. The range of birth defects included problems with the nervous system (such as spina bifida), digestive, musculoskeletal and cardiovascular defects and urinary disease.

Diabetics had a seven per cent risk of a having a baby with a birth defect, compared with about two per cent in women without diabetes. The chance of a birth defect was lowest in women who had blood glucose levels within the normal range at the start of pregnancy.

Researchers analysed more than 401,000 pregnancies, including 1,677 in women with diabetes.

Source: The Independent
Iron intake protects women against PMS

Women with a diet rich in iron were 30 to 40 per cent less likely to develop pre-menstrual syndrome (PMS) than women who consumed lower amounts, in a study reported by researchers at the University of Massachusetts Amherst School of Public Health and Health Sciences, together with Harvard University.

“We found that women who consumed the most non-heme iron, the form found primarily in plant foods and in supplements, had a 30 to 40 per cent lower risk of developing PMS than women who consumed the lowest amount of non-heme iron,” says Bertone-Johnson.

“The level of iron intake at which we saw a lower risk of PMS, roughly greater than 20 mg per day, is higher than the current recommended daily allowance (RDA) for iron for premenopausal women, which is 18 mg per day,” Bertone-Johnson says. This amount may be obtained through 1 to 1.5 servings per day of iron-fortified cereal or with supplements.

“However, as high iron intake may have adverse health consequence, women should avoid consuming more than the tolerable upper intake level of 45 mg per day unless otherwise recommended by a physician,” she notes. Iron may affect PMS because it is involved in producing serotonin, a neurotransmitter that helps to regulate mood, she and colleagues point out.

Source: Medical News Today

‘Aggressive’ prostate cancer gene find

Research reveals that men with prostate cancer and an inherited faulty BRCA2 gene have the worst form of the disease. The BRCA2 gene is linked to hereditary breast cancer as well as prostate and ovarian cancers. Now scientists say that on top of being more likely to get prostate cancer, men with the BRCA2 gene also have higher chances of developing aggressive tumours and have the poorest survival rates.

Prostate cancer can grow extremely slowly or very quickly and this is something that is hard to predict early on. Some men may live symptom-free for a lifetime, despite having this cancer. For many, treatment is not immediately necessary. But researchers say men with faulty BRCA2 gene and prostate cancer should be treated early and aggressively because their tumour is more likely to spread.

Professor Ros Eeles and colleagues at The Institute of Cancer Research in London and The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust found prostate cancers spread more quickly and were more often fatal in men who had inherited a faulty BRCA2 gene than in men who did not inherit it.

Dr Julie Sharp of Cancer Research UK, said, “We knew that men who inherit a faulty BRCA2 gene are at a greater risk of developing prostate cancer but this is the largest study to show that the faulty gene also makes the disease more likely to develop quickly and spread.”

Source: BBC News online
first hospital venture in Hong Kong

Parkway Pantai has strengthened its presence in Hong Kong after a successful bid for a private hospital site with partners NWS Holdings and the Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine of The University of Hong Kong (HKU).

Come late 2016, the people of Hong Kong will be able to enjoy a full range of high quality clinical services with the opening of Gleneagles Hong Kong Hospital (GHKH), Parkway Pantai’s first joint venture hospital project in the Special Administrative Region.

Occupying a gross floor area of 46,750 square metres, the 500-bed GHKH will offer more than 15 specialties including general medicine, general surgery, orthopaedics and traumatology and gynaecology.

The hospital aims to leverage the best clinical and management expertise to address the healthcare needs of the Hong Kong community. It will also focus on the
training of healthcare professionals and the advancement of clinical and research excellence.

“With over 30 years of experience in managing world-class hospitals, together with HKU’s established reputation for medical excellence and NWS Holdings’ local expertise in both construction and facilities management, we are confident that the hospital will provide the best healthcare services for the residents of Hong Kong,” said Dr Tan See Leng, Group Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of Parkway Pantai Limited.

Parkway Pantai will contribute 60% of the total investment cost and the remaining 40% by NWS Holdings. NWS Holdings operates a range of businesses in Hong Kong, Mainland China and Macau and has extensive experience and a strong track record in designing and building hospitals.

HKU will play the role as a clinical partner, overseeing clinical governance, professional standards, appointment of doctors and the training of doctors, nurses as well as allied healthcare staff of the hospital.

As an affiliate teaching hospital of HKU, GHKH will be instrumental in nurturing a pipeline of healthcare professionals by providing an important base for teaching, training and research. The hospital will also provide additional resources for HKU to recruit and retain high quality healthcare professionals to take care of clinical duties and at the same time, contribute to teaching and research.
The new Integrated Wellness Centre, believed to be the first-of-its-kind in the region, will provide a seamless and holistic approach to health and wellness through dedicated health screening and aesthetic centres. With close proximity to the upcoming 300-bed Gleneagles Medini Hospital, users can also tap into Parkway Pantai’s

redefining wellness in Medini, Iskandar

Parkway Pantai will introduce a world-class Integrated Wellness Centre to Afiniti Medini, one of the two urban wellness developments jointly developed by Singapore’s Temasek Holdings and Malaysia’s Khazanah Nasional.
vast clinical expertise on their wellness journey.

Dr Tan See Leng, Group Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of Parkway Pantai Limited, is optimistic that its novel concept of wellness will appeal to the rapidly ageing population who subscribes to the “live well, eat well, live long and prosper” mentality.

“We are also exploring joint programmes with alternative medicine partners to integrate complementary alternative medicine with Western medicine.

“With our new Integrated Wellness Centre and Gleneagles Medini Hospital, we believe Parkway Pantai can contribute to making Medini an attractive medical health destination in the region, spurring the growth of medical tourism and setting the benchmark for high quality healthcare in Malaysia,” he added.

On 19 February 2013, Dr Tan represented Parkway Pantai as a commercial partner in the unveiling of Afiniti Medini and Avira (a resort wellness project in Medini) by Singapore’s Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and his Malaysian counterpart Najib Razak.

Occupying a gross floor area of 699,000 square feet, Afiniti Medini sits right next to Legoland, between Medini Mall and the Gleneagles Medini Hospital. When completed in 2015, the Afiniti aims to be a regional destination for families, tourists and professionals looking to combine wellness, retail and hospitality with corporate training needs.
In January 2013, Dr Tan See Leng, Group Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of Parkway Pantai Limited, held a series of staff town halls at the four Singapore hospitals and Parkway Shenton’s corporate office, thanking the staff personally for their hard work that contributed to the Group’s performing better in 2012 than the previous year. He also updated staff on the Employee Engagement survey findings for Singapore and shared his vision for a Transformation of Parkway to improve staff engagement.
work-life balance. Also present at the town halls to take staff queries were members of the senior management team, Ahmad Shahizam, Executive Director of Corporate Services, Dr Lim Suet Wun, Executive Vice President of Singapore Operations Division and Jamal Bakri, Group Head of Human Resources. Jamal added that the Pantai hospitals would roll out their own Employee Engagement survey shortly.

Dr Lim held a follow-up series of staff town halls in March to share that four work groups had been formed to look after Welfare, Communications, Pay and Benchmarks as well as Training and Development and unveiled the first stage of actions the committees had undertaken for a well-rounded life at the workplace.
Hospitals are open 24 hours every day and there will always be staff on duty around the clock. So it was business as usual on the first day of Chinese New Year at Singapore’s four hospitals: Mount Elizabeth, Mount Elizabeth Novena, Gleneagles and Parkway East where Parkway Pantai staff attended to patients with care and smiles. The smiles became wider when the management team made visits to the wards, kitchens and even behind the security door to spread early morning festive cheer all round in appreciation of the staff’s dedication. The individual hospitals also bonded over their own celebrations during the Chinese New Year period.

SPREADING LUNAR CHEER
Parkway Pantai hosted a special Chinese New Year dinner for doctors and embassies on 21 February 2013 at Ritz-Carlton’s Grand Ballroom in appreciation of their ongoing support for the Group.

Dr Tan See Leng, Group Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, said in his opening speech, “In 2013, we will continue to deliver the uncompromising, top-notch quality healthcare services that Parkway Pantai is known for locally and overseas. Our four hospitals are seeing strong and steady growth in foreign patient volume. Tens of thousands of foreign patients choose to place their health and lives in our hands every year because they are assured of excellent treatment and care.”
Former president of Singapore, S R Nathan, and Chairman of Parkway Pantai, Dato’ Mohammed Azlan Bin Hashim, attended the opening of Novena ENT - Head & Neck Surgery Specialist Centre at Mount Elizabeth Novena Specialist Centre on 19 January 2013. The group practice is founded on the collective experience and subspeciality expertise of four leading ear, nose and throat (ENT) surgeons with 100 years of medical experience combined. The centre is also the only private specialist centre with full hearing health and cochlear implant services.

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the best is yet to come

It was a watershed year for Parkway Shenton in 2012 and Chief Executive Officer Dr Chai Chin Yoong believes that the coming year will bring even more success.

2012 was an outstanding year of achievements for Parkway Shenton, the primary healthcare arm of Parkway Pantai. Under the leadership of its Chief Executive Officer Dr Chai Chin Yoong, 41, Parkway Shenton has grown to new strengths, and business is expanding by the day.

**major contracts**

An area that Parkway Shenton has been most successful in the last few years is in securing key contracts with many government agencies. The first of these was in 2009, when the company won the border-screening contract from the Ministry of Health (MOH).

“That was a big test of the determination of our staff. Just four months after we signed the contract, the H1N1 pandemic happened worldwide. In just 24 hours, we had to set up screening booths at Changi Airport and double our staff strength overnight,” remembers Dr Chai. “The contract was renewed this year, and we are responsible for taking care of all land, sea and air border screening when there is an outbreak of infectious diseases.”

The partnership with MOH continued in 2010, when Parkway Shenton was appointed the main healthcare provider for the Singapore Youth Olympic Games.

And in 2012, Parkway Shenton won a number of contracts of a national scale, the biggest of all being the Singapore Prison Service contract, which is worth S$320 million over eight years.

“I believe that we won the contract because we showed
House Rules for CEO

1. You have been entrusted with Great Talents...... TAKE GOOD CARE OF THEM!

2. WALK THE TALK .........
   5pm every Thursday!

3. Always release staff at 12 noon on the eve of PHs......it's your discretion, not the HOD!

4. Promote Work-Life balance......no staff should work beyond 8pm......except for TCS!

5. CEO must lay a firm foundation with the bricks that others throw at him......but he must not throw it on!

~Your Loyal Subjects

Post-note:
6. Dress-Down FRIDAY!
that we were willing to listen and communicate with the client, and were transparent and effective in addressing areas requiring improvement. And of course, we were fair in our pricing and able to provide good service,” reveals Dr Chai.

“We officially took over the reins at midnight on 27 December last year, and we literally had to hit the ground running,” he adds. “And it wasn’t as simple as going in to take over the running of a clinic. There were major structural changes involving various ministries that had to be taken care of, so there was a lot of adapting and changing of plans. And the system is evolving as more people join the team.”

2012 also saw Parkway Shenton bagging the opportunity to provide medical services to many unions, including the National Taxi Association and Singapore School Transport Association.

Shortly after, Parkway Shenton entered into discussions with National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) to deliver affordable, value-for-money healthcare services to their members.

This led to a landmark agreement to provide NTUC’s 700,000 members with basic medical consultation and up to three generic medications at Shenton Medical Group clinics at a fee of S$22. In addition, NTUC members can enjoy waiver of charges on regular screening tests for selected chronic diseases, affordable health screening packages and special rates at Parkway East Hospital. But Parkway Shenton is not stopping here.

“We are working to open up these schemes to the other Parkway Pantai hospitals in Singapore, so that more patients can benefit from our medical expertise,” shares Dr Chai.

looking ahead
Even with Parkway Shenton’s successful year, they are not slowing down. In the first four months of the year, the group has already embarked on a few big projects.

“We just won the tender for providing medical services to the staff at ITE,” reveals Dr Chai. “We are also working on a new project in Iskandar, Malaysia, to set up an integrated wellness centre to provide wellness, aesthetic
and medical screening services to well-heeled individuals working and living there. This wellness centre will synergise perfectly with Parkway Pantai’s new hospital, Gleneagles Medini, which is located in its vicinity.”

In addition, the team has also won several government tenders. They will provide pre-employment medical health screening packages to the Ministry of Home Affairs as well as the Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore, medical services at Immigration & Checkpoints Authority and doctors to five Singapore Armed Forces medical centres, the last being the first private-public collaboration on the provision of medical care to Singapore soldiers.

Parkway Shenton is also the first to work with the National Healthcare Group to run a Family Medicine Clinic in Ang Mo Kio, which is slated to open in the second quarter of 2013.

“This is another public-private collaboration to cater to an increasing demand for primary care,” shares Dr Chai, “And Parkway Shenton is one of the private sector companies to take up the challenge. This clinic will see mainly patients who are referred from polyclinics, and Parkway Shenton will staff the clinic with family physicians to provide quality healthcare at shorter waiting times. We will also be seeing Community Health Assist Scheme patients, and walk-in patients.

“The whole health ecosystem is changing as the population ages, so the way we practise medicine will also change over time. We also need to adapt to changes in government policies,” he says. “We are always changing our service lines, in anticipation of the changing needs of the population.”

a group effort
The success that Parkway Shenton has achieved is no mean feat, and Dr Chai is quick to attribute the organisation’s achievements to the over 700 staff working hand-in-hand.

“I have to give credit to my staff, who have worked very hard to implement our plans,” he says. “We share the same goal – not only to get the job done, but to get the job done well.”

Going forward, Dr Chai will be putting a greater emphasis on recruitment.

“We’ve come to a critical point where we need to increase the talent bank because we have an increasing number of clients and service lines. Many of our senior management and the middle management have done well. But we’re always looking for new people who can join us,” he shares.

Staff training and development is another important focus for Dr Chai. “I try to ensure that everyone’s talents are well-developed. For those who have a talent for management, we create opportunities for them to shadow the senior staff so that they can learn on the job, and put them in various areas of responsibilities to see if they can perform,” Dr Chai says. “And for those who are more clinically oriented, we put them in training areas with senior doctors and our Quality Assurance committee, to help maintain the level of service to clients.

“At the end of the day, I want my staff to be well-looked after and rewarded in terms of remuneration, welfare and work-life balance. And I also ensure that everyone has maximum exposure to areas they are interested in."

To Dr Chai, his staff is his greatest motivation. “I see myself as a servant to them – I provide them with the ability to function, perform, progress, improve and to rise to the occasion. And I feel that I am obliged to help them maximise their talents – that’s what drives me each day.”

Parkway Shenton runs over 60 healthcare clinics all over the island, including six Executive Health Screeners, two Nippon Medical Care clinics catering to the Japanese community and the Luxe Wellness Centre exclusively for the female clientele. Though many of the clinics are located in the Central Business District, the company is slowly gaining a foothold in the heartlands as well. It opened 10 new clinics in residential estates such as Ang Mo Kio and Bishan in 2012.
Hardship is something Dr Yim Heng Boon will not forget for a very long time. As the sixth of eight children and born into poverty, he experienced it rather early in life.

“We were very poor. It was quite common for my siblings and me to end up sharing one bowl of rice. My mom would feed us – single bowl, single spoon,” reminisces the 46-year-old.

He does not recall the reasons now, but perhaps it was precisely the trials and tribulations of his growing up years that made him determined to make something of himself.

hard work is key

With the single-mindedness of having a career in medicine since the age of eight, Dr Yim did not consider anything else but the realist in him was persuaded to explore alternatives.

“I was well aware that even if you studied very hard and achieved good results, you might still not be selected for medical school. So, the alternative was to take up an overseas scholarship offered by Singapore Police Force to study Law or Political Science. That comes from my
National Police Cadet Corps background, which I fared pretty well in. I even received a double promotion at one point,” lets on Dr Yim, who graduated with the rank of Station Inspector (Staff Sergeant II), the highest rank achievable as a student member.

Fortunately, he was accepted into medical school, and when the time came, he decided to take the untested route by becoming one of the first few trainees at the newly set up Gastroenterology Unit at Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH). There, Dr Yim eventually became the Deputy Head of the Department.

Dr Yim underwent a full one year advanced endoscopy fellowship at Brigham & Women’s Hospital, Harvard Medical School, Boston, USA. Subsequently, he was awarded a second fellowship to learn ESD (endoscopic submucosal dissection) at the National Cancer Centre, Tokyo. This is an advanced endoscopic technique for the removal of early gastric cancer, which allows for maximal tissue preservation as it does not involve removal of large part of the stomach.

Besides the procedures mentioned above, the interventional gastroenterologist also perform a wide range of other therapeutic procedures such as double balloon enteroscopy for small bowel intervention as well as intra-gastric balloon for weight loss. He also manages liver diseases including chronic hepatitis, liver cirrhosis, liver failure and fatty liver.

“My interest and enthusiasm are constantly stimulated in this field. Any new drugs that are developed, I need to know how it’s going to affect the gut or the liver. The endoscopic procedures are not without challenge either. No matter how many times I may have done a particular procedure, each patient is unique, and each case is a new and rewarding experience. But you have to put in the time and effort to do many cases; the experience you gain cannot be gotten from any textbook,” he asserts.

That is a mantra the father of two teenage daughters and a son tries to impart to his children on a daily basis.

“I’ve said this to them many times: ‘I became a doctor through 99 per cent hard work and one per cent intelligence.’ I hope that’s something they take from me.”
“My life has been full of ups and downs. I’ve truly experienced the vicissitudes of life. But if I believe in something strongly and I’m passionate enough about it, I will go all out to achieve or support it. I will find a way, somehow.”

**unexplained satisfaction**

Teaching is another aspect of medicine that Dr Yim cannot seem to get enough of. He still maintains his adjunct appointment at National University of Singapore and continues to teach medical students at TTSH every fortnight.

“When I first see these students, they’re very green and not confident at all. But as time passes, I see them blossoming; and when they become good competent doctors, I feel very happy. It’s really an unexplained satisfaction,” he reveals.

His commitment to sharing his wealth of knowledge is not limited to Singapore alone. He travels frequently to regional countries to teach, share, lecture and perform live endoscopy demonstrations.

“I was actually told that once I entered private practice, I
might not travel so much particularly in the initial stages. But strangely, in the past six months, I have travelled almost every month. I’ve been to Vietnam, Cambodia, Korea, Russia and Thailand,” he chuckles.

The decision to set up his clinic at Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital was an easy one for Dr Yim as he felt the Parkway Pantai organisation was “very experienced in the field” and the “brand new hospital had all the facilities such as operating theatre support, endoscopy centre and wards”.

“I decided this would be the best place for me to start a new niche for myself.”

giving back
Dr Yim’s humble beginnings have also spurred him in other ways. In gratitude of the meritocracy policy that opened up many opportunities for him, he decided he needed to give back in some way.

“I’ve been a North East Community Development Council (CDC) District Councillor for a few terms and I’m now a Tampines East Citizens’ Consultative Committee (CCC) member. I also volunteer my time during Meet-the-People sessions. I went for a church-supported medical mission at Cagayan De Oro, Mindanao, South Philippines last year where I helped to treat the sick and distributed food and clothings to flood victims who were sheltered at the Tent City. It was a humbling and fulfilling experience and I resolve to continue helping out in this aspect regularly.”

And as if he did not have enough on his plate already, Dr Yim decided to challenge himself further by taking up piano lessons (he has gone for Grade 5 theory and practical examinations), and is contemplating skydiving or scuba diving in the near future.

“I’ve always liked the music that emanates from a piano. It’s not easy though. Imagine coming home from work and no matter how tired you are, you still have to practise your scales. On top of that, I have to take the exams in a hall filled with kids!”

While the piano lessons have taken a temporary break due to his busy schedule in setting up practice in the past six months, his early morning Sunday jogs have been a persistent feature in his life for many years now. This is followed by the fatherly and husbandly duties of getting the groceries and preparing breakfast.

But this is nothing new to the boy who worked hard and put in the hours to get where he is.

“My life has been full of ups and downs. I’ve truly experienced the vicissitudes of life. But if I believe in something strongly and I’m passionate enough about it, I will go all out to achieve or support it. I will find a way, somehow.”

And we have no doubt he will continue doing just that.
Many children experience a defining moment in life during which they catch a glimpse of what they would like to do with their future. For 35-year-old medical oncologist Dr Mohd Syahizul Nuhairy Mohd Sharial, better known as Dr Zul, his father’s surgery from a slipped disc two decades ago was his first glimpse into the world of medicine.

The self-professed tech geek who loves tinkering with gadgets and computers and used to harbour boyish dreams of becoming either a policeman, firefighter or teacher found himself irresistibly drawn to medicine and healing when he witnessed how the doctors and medical team charted his father’s path to full recovery.

“It made me see how medicine can make such a big difference to someone’s life. My father later shared that his childhood dream had been to become a doctor. It sealed the decision on the course of study, not just for me but also for my three siblings who are also in healthcare today,” recalls Dr Zul, who is the eldest child.

Little did he realise that his somewhat nomadic childhood and education, moving from Kuching, Sarawak to Kuala Lumpur, was home is where the heart is

Novelist George Moore once said that a man travels the world over in search of what he needs and returns home to find it. The words couldn’t be truer for Dr Mohd Syahizul Nuhairy Mohd Sharial, a medical oncologist at Pantai Hospital Ipoh.
Trengganu, Terengganu; and later from Kuantan, Pahang to Sungai Besar, Selangor had prepared him for bigger challenges ahead.

While undergoing matriculation, the opportunity arose for him to pursue his medical studies in Ireland at the age of 18. This was how he ended up staying in Ireland for the next 16 years, having completed his studies and eventually taking up a sub-specialisation in oncology.

But why oncology? Dr Zul attributes that to the excellent mentorship of the senior doctors in Ireland where he did his internship.

“Cancer is a complicated and intense disease. Patients and family members can get very stressed and unsettled, from the very moment they are diagnosed, throughout their treatment process and even after they have recovered. It takes a very patient and caring clinician to help cancer patients and caregivers get through this difficult phase. The way the doctors in Ireland cared for their patients left an indelible impression on me. They were always providing advice and emotional support, even in cases when the prognosis was poor. I liked the way they treated a patient as a whole instead of just treating the disease,” Dr Zul relates.

Another aspect that amazed him was how the Irish specialists were always ready to share their knowledge. “They were excellent trainers and employers. It was a privilege to have learnt from them and we remain in touch until today,” he says.

home calling
Despite having built a sound reputation for himself in Ireland, a part of him yearned for home. And it was not just the food that he missed, although he happily confesses he enjoys the convenience of 24-hour mamak shops in Malaysia where he can get his favourite food: roti canai.

“Over the years, my wife and I started missing home more often. Our parents are getting old, and I felt bad for my younger siblings who had to bear the responsibility of caring for my parents while I was away,” reveals the family-loving doctor who married his high-school sweetheart in 2002 after a six-year long-distance relationship.

Depriving their children of their grandparents’ affection also pained the young couple, who longed to be closer to home and family.
“I believe that’s what life should be about: helping others and being close to loved ones. It’s what makes one’s life complete.”

“We wanted to be there during important life milestones. It was emotionally tough when I had to miss my brother’s wedding and my grandfather’s funeral. With our parents growing older, we wanted to be near them when they needed us. Our children, too, were growing up and we didn’t want them to forget our roots,” he recalls.

After discussing with his wife, Dr Zul started looking for opportunities to return to Malaysia. He received various offers, including from a university and a public hospital but that was not he wanted.

When Pantai Hospital Ipoh offered him the opportunity to establish the oncology department in mid 2012, he decided to check it out.

“Ipoh was no longer the quiet little town I visited a long time ago as a student. Although it has grown, with better infrastructure and more development, it still retains its unique charm and signature identity with the limestone structures and laid-back society.

“The hospital’s Chief Executive Officer (who was then the Chief Operating Officer), Anwar Anis, and his team brought me for a tour around the hospital and explained their vision and mission. What struck me was how the hospital staff all knew each other, greeting each other in the lifts and along corridors. Everyone was like one big family!” recalls Dr Zul fondly.

More importantly, the hospital had all the essential services and facilities necessary for a dedicated medical oncology centre. Within two months, the family was all packed to go. Thus begins a brand new chapter in the young doctor’s life, on home ground.

a whole new world
Like most children, his children, aged four and ten, adapted quickly to the change. His eldest son, Adam, even says he likes it better here as he could get pocket money for school, compared to his school in Ireland that did not have a school canteen.
Working life, however, was less simplistic. Dr Zul found himself in a predominantly Chinese society and a population of people who still harbour deep-rooted misconceptions about cancer and cancer treatments.

The language difference was no barrier to him because of his years of experience overseas. In fact, he has had Caucasian patients requesting for him back in Ireland because “treatment is more than just diagnosing and prescribing. Bed-side manners can make a world of difference in reassuring cancer patients and their relatives”.

What really bothered him about Malaysian patients was the lack of understanding of how chemotherapy works and the widespread false information on cancer and cancer treatments.

“Most patients ask me whether chemotherapy is painful or given through a special machine, when in fact treatment is similar to getting an IV drip of fluids or other medications. Most people are also unaware that there are different kinds of chemotherapy,” he says. Many Malaysian patients also tend to seek treatment late, often when the cancer has spread, which jeopardises the chances of cure and recovery.

There is also little awareness of the role of a medical oncologist, which he describes as an oncologist who specialises in chemotherapy treatments. He adds, “In developed nations, sub-specialisation is recommended so that patients can get highly targeted treatment and care.

In Malaysia, it is still an emerging field, hence we only have a handful of medical oncologists here.”

His mission now is to educate the public on chemotherapy so as to defuse misconceptions and increase chances of cure. “It’s also another reason for me to come home. This is my chance to contribute to my fellow countrymen after being away for almost two decades.”

**striking a work-life balance**

For many doctors, work-life balance is but a fallacy. But Dr Zul believes it can be achieved by making the right life choices.

“Before I decided to come home, I told myself to find a place where there would be no traffic jams, and where everything is close by so that I could go home for lunch at mid-day and pick my son from school after work. My present position at PHI is exactly the kind of life I dreamed of,” he says gleefully.

When not at work, he would be toying with his computers or gadgets, or bringing his children to the playground or library. The best part is being close enough to his parents and in-laws to visit them more often.

“I believe that’s what life should be about: helping others and being close to loved ones. It’s what makes one’s life complete,” he concludes.
Legendary management guru Peter Drucker once said, “Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things.” Madam Tan Suet Guan’s story is all about the right things at the right place, in the right direction, to establish the ‘Pantai’ brand as a credible name for community healthcare.
Madam Tan Suet Guan, who recently retired as Chief Executive Officer of Pantai Hospital Kuala Lumpur (PHKL), was awarded the Global Leadership Award 2013 for the healthcare sector in the third edition of the Awards.

The recipients of these awards are outstanding business leaders in their respective sectors. Their outstanding qualities are reflected by the organisation’s positive financial results and increased shareholder value. Recipients are recognised for their sound management skills, good corporate governance, demonstrated innovation as well as integrity, best business practices and accountability.

For Madam Tan, who was also the Regional Executive Officer (Central) of Pantai Management Resources of PHKL, leaders are visionary and committed to realising their vision. “Leadership to me is all about making use of the expertise, which is so unique to this noble profession I represent, for the greater good of the society; helping to raise standards of health in Malaysia, which in turn will help raise the productivity of our human resources,” she said.

Realising the need for social inclusion and raising the standards of medical services, Madam Tan has institutionalised community-centric programmes and initiatives to help raise awareness as well as extend healthcare facilities to broader segments of the society. She also pioneered many campaigns including rural outreach programmes to educate Malaysians on various health issues as well as to propagate healthy, productive lifestyles.

On the business side, she not only introduced Centres of Excellence with extremely specialised medical solutions, but forged meaningful partnerships with institutions such as Small Bone Innovations, Inc. (SBI) to deliver innovative, life-saving procedures.

Madam Tan and her forward-looking strategies also led the hospital to adopt advanced software and systems, which improves patient safety and efficiencies through the monitoring and reporting of Clinical Quality Indicators and non-clinical key performance indicators.

Believing in continuous self-improvement, she assigned great importance on preparing the hospitals - through simulations and drills for health crises and exigencies with optimal efficiencies, synergising with various partners and stakeholders.

Madam Tan, recognising the need to stay relevant for local, regional and global stakeholders, steered PHKL to achieve the JCI Accreditation, which is a voluntary process and a ‘Gold Seal of Approval’ from a global authority on the hospital’s high safety standards in healthcare. Under her leadership, PHKL was awarded the JCI Accreditation for the second consecutive term in 2012, in addition to the hospital’s existing accreditation with Malaysian Society for Quality in Health (MSQH) and Baby Friendly Hospital certification.

After 19 years with the Pantai brand, Madam Tan officially retired from her position as Regional Executive Officer (Central) of Pantai Management Resources and Chief Executive Officer of Pantai Hospital Kuala Lumpur on 8 March 2013. She joins Parkway Pantai Group in her new role as Vice President, International Operations.
the reading corner
Pantai Hospital Ipoh (PHI) has started a book sharing programme to promote reading among its patients and staff.

The new Reading Corner is located at the hospital’s Caring Corner in the Outpatient Centre on Level 3. Patients who are unable to go to the Reading Corner will have the books delivered to them by the Customer Service staff.

Although there is no obligation to return these books, readers are encouraged to do so for the benefit of other patients and staff. The hospital welcomes donation of books to expand its collection.

caring from the heart
PHI, in collaboration with Hospital Batu Gajah (HBG) and Cancerlink society, organised a special ‘Season’s Wish’ Christmas event for 70 child patients and their parents on 11 December 2012.

The children momentarily put aside their illnesses as they had fun with PHI staff through a host of activities from games, balloon sculpting and a clown performance to an educational session on healthy food classifications by a dietitian.

Anwar Anis, Chief Executive Officer of PHI, was happy to share the festive joy with the young ones.

“This activity is one of the many corporate social responsibility initiatives organised by the Pantai Hospitals as we strive to be a responsible healthcare provider to our communities,” he said.

Other highlights included the appearance of Santa Claus and a sumptuous tea party which closed the event on a high note.
Gleneagles Penang recently celebrated International Women’s Day in collaboration with the Women’s Heart Health Organisation of the National Heart Association of Malaysia. The Chairman of Gleneagles Penang, Datuk Seri Goh Eng Toon, officiated at the event which was held on 9 March 2013 in the lobby of the new building of Gleneagles Penang.

This is the hospital’s third consecutive effort to create awareness and educate women on the risks of heart disease and stroke. One out of every four women dies of heart disease or stroke, which is two and a half times more common than all cancers combined, earning the title of the number one killer of women in Malaysia.

There was an overwhelming response to the health screening and almost 300 women underwent free blood glucose and cholesterol tests, blood pressure checks as well as body mass index calculations on that day. The women benefited from free counselling on their personal test results and also received advice from a physiotherapist before walking away with goodie bags filled with information booklets and flyers.

The organising chairman, Dr Ong Mei Ling, was supported by doctors and staff, all dressed in red. The women were encouraged to regularly check on their heart health status and learn about preventive measures for the disease, keeping in line with the theme ‘Healthy Heart, Happy Women’.

Celebrating International Women’s Day

Gleneagles Penang provides free health checks to promote women’s health and create awareness on the risks of heart disease and stroke.
It was 1974 when Pantai Hospital Kuala Lumpur was first established with just over 60 beds and 20 medical doctors. Almost four decades later, the hospital with several accolades under its belt, prides itself on having a team of close to 170 highly qualified specialists and various innovative medical solutions as it continues to strive towards healthcare and service excellence.

The Chairman of Pantai Holdings Berhad, Datuk Khairil Anuar Bin Abdullah added at the Anniversary Dinner, “Awards and recognitions are the fruits of labour of our hardworking staff and loyal patients. We believe each member of Pantai Hospital Kuala Lumpur, be it employee or patient, is a part of our family. And we do our best to provide the best for our family. I wish everyone here a very happy 39th Anniversary and hope for many more successful years to come.”
bowled over

Pantai hospitals in the northern region and Gleneagles Penang strike a happy note with their first-ever inter-hospital bowling tournament.

A total of 20 teams from Pantai Hospital Penang (PHP), Pantai Hospital Ipoh (PHI), Pantai Hospital Sungai Petani and Gleneagles Penang competed for top honours at the first Northern Region Inter-Hospital Bowling Tournament held on 9 March 2013 in Penang.

After rounds of intense competition, the Gleneagles Penang team comprising Ivan Loh, K Parameshwaran, Ferlicia Chin and Siti Noorainie clinched the championship trophy with a combined pinfall of 488. PHI bagged the first and second runner-up trophies with scores of 471 and 464 pinfalls respectively. PHP was placed fourth with 408 pinfalls.

In addition, prizes were also awarded to the top male and female bowlers.

Ronald Koh, Northern Region Chief Executive Officer, who was present to lend his support, was impressed with the players’ sportsmanship and team spirit.

Indeed, the players, some of whom had never touched a bowling ball in their lives, demonstrated determination and drive as they went all out to improve the ranking of their teams.

After a rolling good time on the lanes, the participants and guests adjourned for their hard-earned buffet dinner.

Congratulations to all the winners.
One can tell that Thaipusam is a big thing in Penang, from the sheer number of panthals (refreshment stalls) lining the entire stretch of Western Road leading to the Arulmigu Balathandayuthapani Murugan Temple, where worshippers sought blessings and offered thanks in the annual procession.

This year was no different, as thousands of locals, worshippers and visitors gathered to celebrate the colourful festival from 26 to 28 January 2013.

Pantai Hospital Penang (PHP) set up its very own panthal to provide free vegetarian food and drinks to the devotees, as a way of engaging the community. The stall was managed by PHP staff volunteers and their family members, and funded by donations from the hospital.

Chief Executive Officer of PHP, Lai Yeu Kong, was present at the chariot procession on Thaipusam’s eve and the traditional breaking of coconuts just before the chariot arrived at the panthal.

Chief Minister of Penang, YAB Mr Lim Guan Eng, also visited the PHP panthal along with other state leaders.
venturing into Vietnam

Managed by Parkway Pantai, City International Hospital is the first in a series of healthcare facilities to be constructed in International High-Tech Healthcare Park and is set to be the largest international standard private hospital in Ho Chi Minh City.

City International Hospital (CIH) will join the ranks of international standard hospitals operating in Vietnam when it opens its doors to the public in the first half of 2013. Situated in the heart of International High-Tech Healthcare Park (IHHP) in the populous district of Binh Tan, Ho Chi Minh City, the 320-bed multi-disciplinary hospital will cater to the discerning patients of the city and surrounding area seeking world class healthcare services.
CIH is designed to be patient centric. Sitting on 2.5 hectares of land with a built-up area of 57,000 square metres spanning nine levels, the structure of the hospital help staff and doctors achieve the best outcome for the patients. Critical care areas such as the 20-bed Intensive Care Unit, eight Labour & Delivery Suites, 18-bed Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and two Cardiovascular Laboratories are interlinked to the 10 Operating Theatres. These key services are deliberately placed adjacent to each other to maximise patient safety, care and operational efficiencies.

The entire hospital is handicapped-friendly and all patient rooms, from twin sharing to single to VIP categories, offer a soothing environment for healing.

CIH’s key specialities include General Medicine, Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Paediatrics, General Surgery, Gastroenterology, Oncology, Orthopaedics, Otorhinolaryngology, Urology, Ophthalmology, Neurosurgery and Aesthetic Services. Heart & Vascular services will be offered soon after opening. The hospital will combine the latest medical technology available in the market with warm, personalised care. All CIH nurses and clinical staff are trained to provide a high standard of patient safety and care.

Managed by Parkway Pantai and wholly owned by Hoalam-Shangrila Healthcare, CIH will leverage Parkway Pantai’s over 30 years of hospital management expertise in the region. With an extensive network of sister hospital brands such as Mount Elizabeth and Gleneagles, CIH will also be a platform for local doctors and visiting consultants to broaden the range of medical and healthcare choices available to patients in Vietnam.

IHHP resides on 37.6 hectares of land within 20 minutes from the heart of Ho Chi Minh City and is one of the first dedicated healthcare zones for healthcare professionals and patients in Vietnam. When fully completed in 2018, IHHP will cater to over 10 million people in Ho Chi Minh City and its surrounding area seeking international standard healthcare services.
Dr Foo Chek Siang, a General Surgeon practising at Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital, talks about the benefits of laparoscopy in gallbladder surgery.

Laparoscopy is a common procedure and is most often applied for surgical removal of gallbladder (cholecystectomy).

Also called minimally invasive surgery or keyhole surgery, laparoscopy is a modern technique in which operations in the abdomen are done through three to four small incisions between 6 and 11mm, compared to a conventional open surgery where a 8 to 15cm incision is made.

The most obvious advantage of laparoscopy is smaller scars, which results in better appearance and self-esteem. Patients also benefit from lower risk of infection, less post-operative pain and faster recovery.

Advancements in laparoscopy have further reduced the size of incisions. In minilaparoscopy, gallbladder patients require no more than 3.5mm incisions. The tissue trauma they experience is also halved, with the use of low friction, conical-tip instruments. The result is smaller and more natural looking scars.

Further refinements to the minilaparoscopic cholecystectomy technique have removed the use of clips to ligate the duct or artery in the gallbladder. Instead, the artery is “burnt” using a high frequency electric current and the duct is tied with surgical knots within the body. The cost of operation is reduced and patients reported little pain and greater satisfaction with the surgery results.

Apart from gallbladder surgery, minilaparoscopy is also used in basic operations such as hernia mesh repair and appendicectomy (surgical removal of vermiform appendix). It is also applied in advanced operations including reflux procedures, sympathectomy (surgical destruction of nerves to reduce pain and excessive sweating), abdominal lymph node sampling and removal of abdominal mesenteric cysts.
Established since 1994 to treat patients suffering from all kinds of liver diseases, ACLDT has turned in nothing short of a stellar report card in its 19th year of operation.

Walking into its premises at Gleneagles Hospital, one cannot help but marvel at the walls covered with framed newspaper clippings of survival and hope. Some may have faded with time, but turning two decades old in a competitive industry, with exciting plans in the pipeline to boot, is definitely one feat worth celebrating.

**scaling new heights**

In October last year, ACLDT formalised an agreement with the University of Pittsburgh Medical Centre (UPMC), a US$10-billion integrated global health enterprise headquartered in Pittsburgh, USA to develop a Comprehensive Transplant Centre (CTC) in Singapore to treat liver, kidney, stem cells and bone marrow diseases. It will specialise in transplant immunology, pathology, infectious diseases and intensive care of immune-suppressed patients.

Under this collaboration, UPMC will provide specialised services and advice needed to set up the CTC. The ACLDT, together with a new Asian Centre for Blood & Bone Marrow Transplantation at GEH, form part of the CTC and are specialist clinics under the new Asian American Medical Group (AAMG). The AAMG plans to spearhead the development of this partnership in Asia and Middle East through satellite specialist centres in key cities starting with more straightforward medical procedures to treat liver diseases.

Liver transplant pioneer and expert Dr Tan Kai Chah, who is Chairman of the AAMG, describes UPMC as a mecca for solid organ transplant patients. He is confident that this partnership will open the door to other kinds of transplants.

“Today there are many sorts of transplants performed all around the world that have not been performed in Asia,” he says. “We are extremely proud that UPMC is keen to work with us to enhance the treatment of our patients to another level.”

Rome was not built in a day, Dr Tan recalls. When the ACLDT first started, it was a single-person practice but over the years, it grew in strength and numbers to include...
other physicians such as intensivist Dr Lee Kang Hoe, hepatologist Dr Vincent Lai, surgeon Dr Salleh Ibrahim, and a dedicated supportive team. Today, the centre sees around 8,000 patients a year from regional countries.

“From the beginning, we were very conscious about our results so when UPMC did their due diligence, they were very pleased with the outcome of our patients, our protocols and standard of our clinical management,” shares Dr Tan.

It was also a natural progression for ACLDT to look at other branches of transplantation, be it bone marrow, kidney or stem cells, given the commonalities shared among the disciplines.

“We face similar infectious problems and share many of the medications for anti rejections, for example. Naturally, doctors who look after one group of transplant patients are well qualified to look after other transplant patients so we felt this was definitely something we can improve upon,” explains Dr Tan.

Dr Tan is focused on leading the AAMG forward as it embarks on this new chapter of growth. Collaboration is the way to go, he emphasises. “In the past 20 years, patients walk through the door and private practitioners see them as consumers,” he says. In the future, this might be difficult for individual doctors to sustain, as business costs get higher. The stakes are different when clinical oversight from major institutions like UPMC comes into the picture.

“We are no longer just a private practice,” he says. “With clinical oversight from a major medical institution like UPMC, it becomes easier for us to market to health authorities or ministries in other countries and assure them patients are treated the right way.”

Being housed in Gleneagles Hospital itself is another form of strategic collaboration. The hospital has a specialty unit - Parkway Asian Liver Ward - since 2006 with specially trained nurses that ensures the patients receive seamless care from the same group of healthcare providers throughout the hospitalisation and subsequent visits. In 2012, the Liver Ward underwent extensive renovation for capability enhancement to admit other types of transplant patients such as kidney and bone marrow as well as stem cell transplants.

**celebrating milestones**

ACLDT also celebrated its achievement of being the first private medical centre in Southeast Asia to have performed 200 living donor liver transplants (LDLT) as of 30 September 2012. It carries out between 20 and 25 LDLTs a year. Dr Tan estimates the team to double the number of procedures in the near future, thanks to the new CTC.

Making the headlines for the successful life-saving liver transplant he performed for actress Andrea De Cruz in 2002, Dr Tan describes it as his most memorable case. Only aged 27 then, the actress was dying from liver failure after taking slimming pills from China.

The watershed case became the first in which the Ministry of Health allowed non-related living donors with an emotional relationship to undergo the transplant operation. It has since successfully paved the way for many other patient-donor pairs.

“It’s not just the efforts of one surgeon, but a whole team of people and the backroom boys and girls that have made it happen,” says Dr Tan with pride. “Transplant is just a part of our work, but it is a costly matter of life and death where high expectations and heavy investments are involved,” he says. “And when things don’t go well, it is common for everyone in the team to get affected, learn and mature together.”

“Many of these patients are at the throes of death and for some, their families have even prepared graves for them,” he says. “So when given a second lease of life, they live it very differently because they become very conscious of the value of life.”

“This makes you feel that what you are doing is right.”
success stories

MADAM AYE KYAING, 66
TRANSPLANT: January 2011

When she was first diagnosed with liver cirrhosis in 2006, Madam Aye Kyaing, 66, suffered from symptoms like yellow decolourisation of skin and ascites. For the next five years till her liver transplant operation in January 2011 when her 24-year-old nephew donated a part of his liver to her, life was a blur of hospital visits, loss of consciousness and chemotherapy.

“We were very worried about our mother because she was in a very bad state,” says Win Win, her daughter. “We did not expect my mother to recover. It has brought us a lot of hope.”

Although Madam Kyaing was hesitant to undergo the procedure because she “accepted that it was her life”, her family eventually persuaded her that it was the only way to survive.

“I wasn’t afraid because of my Buddhist beliefs,” she explains. “But I am thankful to my family for standing by me.”

These days, she busies herself at home in Mandalay doing charity work and living an active life.

“In the end, life is about the journey and experience,” she says. “I am deeply grateful to the doctors for their help.”
The road to Madam Hateejal Beevi’s liver transplant was a long one. It took her two years to confirm that she was suffering from liver disease, and a few hiccups along the way including a hip bone replacement surgery before she finally underwent the transplant in 2006 with a partial liver graft donated by her son Mr Mohamed Eusoph, now 40.

During this time, the disease reduced her to a shadow of her boisterous personality. “When I got sick, I lost all my enthusiasm and will to live,” she shares.

Madam Beevi describes the doctors as her pillars of strength. In order to finance the operation, she had to sell her HDB flat she had intended to leave for her children. This left her feeling helpless, insecure and hesitant to undergo surgery.

“It was the positive outlook of the ACLDT doctors, nurses, surgeons and their passion that helped us pull through,” says Nisha, her daughter. “They may not have realised it then but for us it was a big deal.”

Fast forward seven years later, Madam Beevi has fully recovered and has since learnt to cherish her health. From someone who did not believe in visits to the doctor, she now realises the value of being diligent with her medicine, diet, exercise and medical check-ups.
Leeks and tomatoes provide a good hit of antioxidants whilst the snapper brings great lean protein to the mix. In this recipe, fish is scalded with hot oil, so that it is barely cooked.

ESCALOPE OF SNAPPER WITH LEEK AND TOMATO
By IGNATIUS CHAN & CHEF AKMAL ANUAR
This recipe is adapted with kind permission from Parkway Cancer Centre’s Awakening the Appetite.

SERVES 2
250g snapper filet (sashimi-grade)
2 tablespoons butter
2 leeks, well washed, and thinly sliced
1 tablespoon olive oil
10 cherry tomatoes, washed, and quartered
A sprig of thyme, chopped
Salt and pepper to taste

For the flavoured oil:
100ml olive oil
1 small fennel bulb, finely chopped
3 tablespoons fennel seeds
10 basil leaves, chopped
1 teaspoon black peppercorns
2 shallots, finely chopped
2 sprigs of thyme, chopped

For the garnish:
Tarragon leaves
Pea shoots (optional)

DIRECTIONS
Cut the snapper into very thin slices and place in one layer on a large plate. Season lightly with salt and set aside.

Melt the butter in a frying pan over low heat and cook the leeks, with a pinch of salt, gently till soft but not coloured — about 15 to 20 minutes.

In another small pan, heat the olive oil and cook the tomatoes slowly with the thyme. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

To make the flavoured oil, combine all of the ingredients for the flavoured oil in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Strain into a clean pan and reheat.

Scald the fish by carefully pouring hot oil all over the snapper. Alternatively, brush the snapper with oil and season with salt and pepper. Then, either bake in an oven at 220 degrees Celsius for 10 to 15 minutes or pan-fry until cooked through.

Spoon a portion of leeks onto a plate and top with the tomatoes. Transfer the fish slices onto the top of the vegetables. Garnish with tarragon leaves and pea shoots (optional).
With each new generation, it’s good to know there are some things you can always rely on.

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