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Singapore focuses on prevention care and recovery through integrative medicine

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To explore the role of Traditional Chinese Medicine as a complementary treatment to manage pain, palliative symptoms, rehabilitation



NHG Health's flagship hospital Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH) and Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore) are embarking on the Prevention & Recovery through Integrative Medicine (PRIME) Collaboration.

Integrative medicine is an approach to medical care that recognises the benefit of combining conventional therapies (such as drugs and surgery) with complementary therapies.

Through this partnership, NTU Singapore and TTSH will explore the role of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) as a complementary treatment to manage pain, palliative symptoms, rehabilitation, and other suitable conditions.

The partnership will also strengthen the training of TCM practitioners in Singapore. From 2027, NTU Singapore's Chinese Medicine final-year students will undergo clinical rotations at TTSH, where they will observe how TCM and Western medicine can co-exist in patient care, while gaining practical knowledge tailored to Singapore's healthcare context.

On research and development, NTU Singapore and TTSH will develop a foundation for evidence-based practices involving TCM and integrative medicine through clinical research or trials.

NTU Singapore researchers are also advancing clinical research in the field. For example, a team led by Associate Professor Linda Zhong has found electroacupuncture to be a promising treatment for obesity. NTU Singapore researchers have also conducted clinical trials that show the potential of herbal medicine and acupuncture in treating functional gastrointestinal disorders (common disorders characterised by persistent and recurring gastrointestinal symptoms). The researchers will work with TTSH clinicians to conduct larger-scale clinical trials, as well as studies into the mechanisms through which herbal medicine and acupuncture interact with the way functional gastrointestinal disorders develop.

In addition, the University is exploring the use of artificial intelligence to enhance TCM applications, such as AI-powered Tuina massage robots.