

Singapore expands free tele-health services to include monitoring for mental well-being

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The mental well-being questionnaire was implemented by Ageing Research Institute for Society and Education (ARISE) at NTU



Following a successful pilot, a free health monitoring initiative led by graduate students from Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore) has been expanded to the residents of Bukit Gombak, in partnership with South West Community Development Council (CDC).

The Community Telehealth Service (CTS) now aims to provide free health screening to 2,000 people, doubling its target from the pilot in January 2021, which took place in Punggol.

The second phase of CTS also includes monitoring for mental well-being, which has been a recent area of concern. A new study by the Institute of Mental Health pointed to a likely increase in mental health issues in Singapore amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The AI eye health screening system is provided by Singapore start-up EyRIS with camera support provided by Mandarin Opto-Medic Co. Called EyRIS SELENA+, it uses an automated camera to take several images of a person's eye and its artificial intelligence-powered system then processes the retinal images to examine for three types of eye disease - diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma suspect, and age-related macular degeneration.

The mental well-being questionnaire was implemented with the expertise of researchers from the Ageing Research Institute for Society and Education (ARISE) at NTU, a pan-university institute focused on ageing-related research, programmes, and activities to address the demands of an ageing population. The questionnaire is based on the World Health Organisation's Five Well-Being Index (WHO-5), which has been shown to be effective in screening for depression. NTU faculty advised on the implementation of the questionnaire and trained volunteers on how to best conduct it.