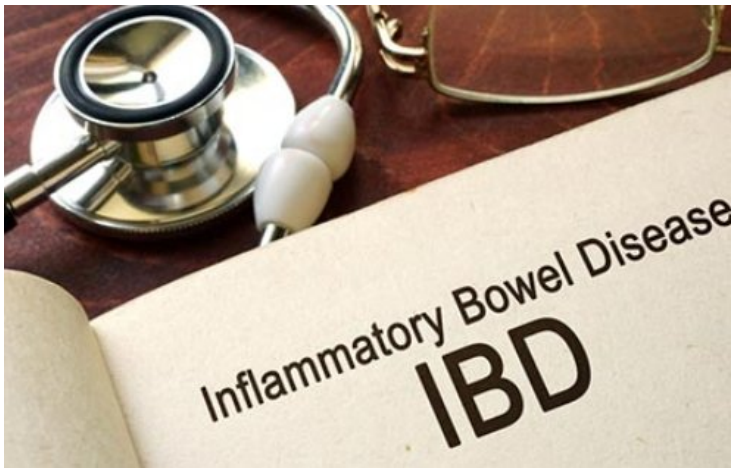
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ASIA EDITION

Singapore makes effort to close invisible gap in inflammatory bowel disease

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To help patients across Southeast Asia and India benefit from faster, non-invasive monitoring and more informed treatment decisions



Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) can be deceptive. Over time, this unseen inflammation can damage the intestinal lining and cause ulcers, even before symptoms become apparent. This mismatch between how patients feel and what is happening inside the body is a major challenge in managing IBD, which affects an estimated 3,000 people in Singapore and a rising number across Asia. Without regular monitoring, ongoing inflammation can lead to serious complications, hospitalisation and surgery.

To address this challenge, Singapore General Hospital (SGH) and the International Bowel Ultrasound Group (IBUS) in collaboration with Johnson & Johnson have launched a regional initiative to expand access to intestinal ultrasound (IUS), a non-invasive tool that allows doctors to assess bowel inflammation in real time during a clinic visit.

As treatment goals in IBD continue to evolve beyond symptom control towards achieving deeper outcomes such as endoscopic remission, where the bowel lining appears visibly healthy upon internal examination, timely and accurate assessment of inflammation has become increasingly important.

The inaugural programme will train and certify 19 gastroenterologists from leading institutions across Southeast Asia and India. Beyond the initial cohort, the collaboration aims to support the establishment of 15 IUS-capable centres, strengthen access to advanced disease monitoring for close to 1,000 patients in the first year, and build a sustainable network of specialists who can champion best practices in IBD care across the region.

As the host institution, SGH will serve as the regional training hub, drawing on its expertise as home to Singapore's first dedicated multidisciplinary IBD Centre. Through the programme, SGH will share its experience in disease monitoring, clinical decision-making and integrated patient care.