



Mr Aziz Bin Ab Hamed
Senior Nurse Clinician
Institute of Mental Health
Age: 60

In a career spanning three decades, Aziz has made several significant strides in improving patient care. A notable achievement is his contribution to the transformation of care, from a custodial to recovery model, in Singapore's only psychiatric hospital. A trailblazer by nature, Aziz has shown that no steps are too small when it comes to caring for psychiatric patients. In doing so, he has transformed the lives of many patients and created a lasting testimony that recovery from mental illness is possible.

Most of Aziz's patients live with chronic serious mental illnesses such as schizophrenia or major depressive disorder. The debilitating effects of such illnesses left many of them incapable of functioning independently and becoming long-stay patients in the hospital.

In 2015, Aziz and several colleagues spearheaded a slow-stream rehabilitation programme aimed at equipping long-stay patients with independent living and vocational skills, helped patients find purpose and accomplishment, even earned a small income from their participation, and augmenting the hospital's recovery-care model. He led the setting up of a 320m² hydroponics garden where patients now grow, harvest and sell vegetables and in the process, reap vocational benefits. A café operating from a ward imparts selected patients with culinary and kitchen management skills. Patients with deft fingers find joy in producing handicrafts in a ward-based workshop and these were either sold or bought as corporate gifts. A cross-department vocational training project created part-time jobs for a group of patients, who support ward staff in housekeeping chores. The needs of patients with co-morbidities of mental illness and intellectual disabilities are not neglected, as an indoor Microgreen Garden helps assuage their anxiety and aggression and improve their productive engagement.

"In the past, we took care of their basic needs. Now, we teach them skills to survive on their own and find meaning in their lives," Aziz sums up. The successful discharge of 120 long-stay patients to date is a strong testimony of the efficacy of this recovery-based care in helping patients regain confidence and independence.

In 2018, he received the Nightingale Award, the highest nursing accolade in IMH, in recognition of his exemplary work. Aziz shows age is no barrier to learning – at 48 years-old, he returned to school as a mature student to pursue a Masters of Nursing (Mental Health) at the National University of Singapore. He guest-lectures at the Nanyang Polytechnic to Advanced Diploma in Nursing students. In IMH, he mentors fellow Nurse Clinicians and helps forge a conducive work environment.



Ms Eng Chui Lee Julia 黄翠莉
Deputy Director of Nursing
Advanced Practice Nurse
KK Women's and Children's Hospital
Age: 47

Julia's nursing journey began 27 years ago, when she joined the first cohort in Singapore to obtain a nursing diploma programme at Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP). As one of the first few batches of Advanced Practice Nurses (APNs) in Singapore, Julia finds immense fulfilment in developing her team of nurses. Over the years, she has successfully groomed 34 APNs and 32 Specialty Care Nurses to provide care for women and children.

Julia pioneered several APN clinics such as the Gynaecological Oncology APN clinic, and the APN pre-operative assessment and evaluation clinic. She also leads KK Women's and Children's Hospital's (KKH) nursing research and nursing education department. She initiated the use of needleless connectors in the central line while maintaining a closed system to prevent catheter occlusion and infections. She also introduced the use of pre-filled normal saline syringe to save nurses' preparation time and prevent contamination for intravenous medication administration. This has since been implemented as a standard practice at KKH.

To advance nursing education in Singapore, Julia, through the Ministry of Health (MOH)'s APN Development committee, successfully implemented changes to the Master Programme in Nursing at the National University of Singapore, and the Integrated APN Internship Programme at MOH. She also lectures at the Singapore Institute of Technology for the Bachelor of Nursing programme, and at NYP for the Advanced Diploma in Oncology course. In addition, Julia mentors students of the Alice Lee Centre for Nursing Studies. She led a team in the development of a graduate certificate programme, accredited by SingHealth College of Clinical Nursing, to empower community nursing to manage women and children and provide care as a family unit.

Julia has a special interest in oncology, which was ignited when she worked in the KKH oncology ward as a young nurse. She currently chairs the Oncology Nurses Chapter under the Singapore Nurses Association, the SingHealth Cluster APN Development Council, and the KK Women's Cancer Support Group. Julia also developed programmes such as the Gynaecology Cancer Course aimed at advancing nurses' competencies. Beyond Singapore, she is involved in annual humanitarian work in Nepal and Ladakh – raising awareness and providing health screening to women.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Julia successfully led the deployment of teams for external operations. She worked with paediatric APNs, Infectious Diseases physicians and the operations team to set up mobile swab teams for childcare centres.



Ms Liu Fang 刘芳
Senior Nurse Educator
Assisi Hospice
Age: 42

Having worked in various nursing settings for 20 years, Liu Fang discovered her passion as a nurse educator when she was a preceptor in a ward. Her interest in teaching grew when she became a clinical instructor to nursing students, and she went on to complete her Masters of Science in Education for Healthcare Professionals at King's College London in 2011.

Liu Fang found her second passion – palliative care, graduating as the top student of her cohort for the Specialist Diploma in Palliative Care Nursing in 2015.

As a Senior Nurse Educator at Assisi Hospice, Liu Fang is affirming and inspiring to her nursing colleagues, always supporting their development and finding the best ways to equip them. She was instrumental in developing the nursing competency framework at Assisi, which became a guide for other disciplines when developing theirs.

Liu Fang understands the challenges her colleagues face, and finds ways to enable effective learning to overcome these challenges. Communication with patients and their families in a palliative care setting could be challenging, especially during the highly stressful pandemic. She played a major role in the development and implementation of a de novo communication training workshop named “Game of Thorns – Tricky Conversations at the End of Life” for all clinical staff in Assisi Hospice. She designed role-play scenarios based on real life situations, which were specific to the respective roles of the staff, ranging from nurses, therapists, to social workers. Staff shared that the role-play practices enabled them to apply what they had learned to real life situations after completing the workshop. She also trained nurses and helped them overcome challenges on the usage of Palliative Care Outcomes Collaboration, an assessment tool to measure patients’ outcome in palliative care, when Assisi Hospice adopted it in 2019.

Liu Fang makes significant contribution to palliative care training on a national level. She was appointed by MOH as the secretariat of the Palliative Nursing Competency Framework Development Workgroup. She was also invited by the SingHealth Duke-NUS Supportive and Palliative Care Centre to provide guidance on development of a palliative care nursing competency framework for the SingHealth cluster. She had been invited by both Nanyang and Ngee Ann Polytechnics to their curriculum review committees for the Advanced Diploma in Nursing (Palliative Care) and Specialist Diploma in Palliative Care Nursing Course respectively.

As a nursing leader and educator, she is very grateful to have the trust, encouragement, and support from leaders who have inspired and guided her along the way. She aspires to be one of them to continue to motivate and nurture others.



Ms Nirmala Bte Karmaroon
Deputy Director of Nursing
Tan Tock Seng Hospital
Age: 56

Nirmala joined the nursing service 40 years ago, with considerable years in critical care of Neurology ICU. She has since transitioned from a nurse to her current administrator role, and is greatly respected for her progressive approaches in staff development and talent management at Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH).

During the surge in COVID-19 cases, she was integral in manpower planning, ensuring that quality of patient care was maintained alongside a balance in nurses' work-lives and organisational outcomes. She displayed agility and adaptability to crisis operations, and her leadership strengthened the hospital's outbreak response and business-as-usual operations with minimal impact on routine business, staff wellbeing and patient safety.

Nirmala helped set the foundation for the Team Care Nursing Delivery Model, where an experienced nurse takes on the responsibility to supervise the team via a sub team buddy system to manage a group of patients for better patient-staff care and safety. She also spearheaded the lead Nurse Clinician development competency framework, which allowed nurses more authority and accountability for care delivery; and Outpatient Nursing Enterprise – Specialist Outpatient Clinic (SOC) Nurses Job Design Career Development, which enhanced the role of SOC nurses towards preventive care and to manage chronic diseases.

Nirmala is a constant role model and a trusted coach. She embraced challenges that led to her and her staff's professional development. She manages the talent management pool of nurses, nursing scholars and strong performing nursing staff to help them progress up the career ladder with expanded scope and responsibilities. She was instrumental in enhancing the "kampong spirit" in TTSH where nurses accepted and embraced cross-departmental deployment especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nirmala is consulted locally and regionally to share her domain knowledge specifically in using TrendCare data for effective strategic manpower planning. She was the first nurse among local hospitals who used the data to create a workflow for deployment to ensure equity in nursing workloads across the different clinical settings. She is also an active volunteer in community initiatives such as distribution of food and gifts to needy beneficiaries.

She hopes that the nursing workforce will develop further in the area of workforce sustainability, through the optimisation of roles, development of skillsets to ensure an agile workforce that is deployable with a breath of competencies, transformation of career pathways to attract and retain nurses, and new care models that transform the way care is delivered.



Ms Png Gek Kheng 方月卿
Chief Nurse
Advanced Practice Nurse
Changi General Hospital
Age: 50

A 30-year nursing veteran who continues to practise today, Gek Kheng rose through the ranks to become the Chief Nurse of Changi General Hospital (CGH). Her many achievements include pioneering the establishment and advancement of geriatric nursing standards. An accomplished APN who is passionate about the care of older adults, Gek Kheng has been instrumental in initiatives to build and strengthen nursing competencies in geriatric care. She has spearheaded interventions in areas including dementia, urinary incontinence and chronic wounds, as well as patient advocacy, caregiver training and advanced care planning.

Envisioning the need for a robust healthcare framework in preparation for Singapore's ageing population, Gek Kheng championed the set-up of The Integrated Building on the CGH campus in 2014. The conception of this sustainable and multi-disciplinary model supports the holistic care for seniors and their transition from hospital to home and this has led to CGH's accreditation as one of the few Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders Hospitals in Singapore.

When Gek Kheng took on the reins of CGH nursing leadership in 2020, COVID-19 presented an unprecedented challenge. Despite the highly volatile pandemic situation, Gek Kheng actively led nursing operations and steadfastly rallied the team through innumerable recalibrations and reconfigurations of workflows and resources to deliver the best possible care to patients in the hospital and at migrant worker dormitories, and also keep healthcare colleagues safe.

Dedicated to building clinical expertise in wound management since 2011, Gek Kheng's foresight to address specific needs of patients locally culminated in the establishment of the CGH Wound Healing Centre (WHC) in 2021. The WHC is the first-of-its-kind one-stop centre that provides early intervention and specialises in outpatient treatment of chronic wounds.

Highly committed to the digital transformation and future-proofing of nursing skills, she steered the development of a Nursing Innovation Pathway to nurture nursing leaders, and continues to redefine nursing roles, including correctional health in prisons. At the national level, Gek Kheng represents SingHealth in establishing MOH's Geriatric Competency Framework. Her conviction in evidence-based practices and enduring efforts in advocating the discovery and translation of novel nursing theories to clinical practice, has enhanced patient care outcomes and enabled the continual progression of the Nursing profession.

Gek Kheng has won numerous accolades throughout her career, including the MOH Healthcare Humanity Award in 2014, the Commendation Medal at the National Day Awards in 2019, and the Singapore Health Quality Service Awards 2019 Best Team Award.



Ms Zhang Di 张棣
Assistant Director of Nursing
Advanced Practice Nurse
Sengkang General Hospital
Age: 46

With an impressive nursing career spanning 23 years, Zhang Di is an exemplary nurse leader who possesses outstanding competencies and expertise in the areas of geriatric and community nursing. After graduating in 1998, Zhang Di joined Changi General Hospital where she developed a keen interest in geriatric nursing. She was instrumental in setting up the memory service in 2004 and dementia unit in 2014. In 2007, she collaborated with geriatricians to equip nurses with skills in male catheterisation and bowel management, significantly improving the standards of continence care for older patients.

Zhang Di extended the scope of her professional practice from hospital to the community. She defined the role and service scope of the community nurses based on clinical guidelines and protocols. She also set up SingHealth's first Community Nurse Post in a Senior Activity Centre, a nurse-led programme for SingHealth Community Nursing, well-recognised by residents and community care partners with more than 50 satellite sites, serving more than 10,000 residents from 2017 to 2020.

Zhang Di was a key member of two major nursing projects under MOH's Chief Nursing Officer's Office from 2016 to 2020, namely the Community Nursing workgroup including the RHS-led Community Nursing Teams pilot launched in 2017 and the development of the Community Nursing Competency Framework launched in 2020.

Zhang Di is instrumental in the development and delivery of geriatric-care training at Sengkang General Hospital (SKH). She drives the ongoing development of a nurse-led geriatric service outreach program, Geriatric Resource for Assessment and Care of the inpatient Elderly, equipping inpatient care teams with skills and knowledge in approaching older patients with dementia, delirium and falls. She also tailored and piloted delirium assessment and care bundles for inpatient wards, improving care for older patients.

Zhang Di is currently pursuing her Doctorate in Nursing Practice at Duke University, developing her competency and expertise in evidence-based practice. She hopes to develop this area for SKH nursing, and advance nurses' role in translating evidence into practice and eliminating redundant nursing tasks. Her research contributions and passion are related to the health and care of older adults.

Zhang Di sees every nurse as integral to the nursing education system. Nurses' attitudes towards juniors and students, compassion for patients and professional integrity exert significant influence on the professional journey and career choices of others. She hopes to foster a culture of nursing education in practice settings, igniting positive energy and attitude within the workforce, a viable strategy in retaining nurses.