



# Spotlight on Parkinson

## Caring for our Parkinson patients



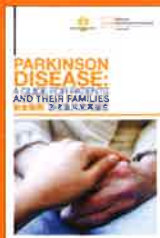
Participants warming-up before the start of the Public Forum on Parkinson Disease.

To promote the importance of staying active for patients with Parkinson Disease, the National Neuroscience Institute (NNI) collaborated with Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH) and the Parkinson's Disease Society (Singapore) (PDSS) to organise a Public Forum entitled 'Movement Matters'. Conducted in both English and Mandarin, the forum was held at the NNI Exhibition Hall on 16 March 2013, and drew over 250 participants.

"It was a wonderful atmosphere with everyone seeming to know each other. There is certainly a rapport being built between the patients, caregivers, nurses, therapists as well as the staff of NNI and PDSS", remarked Associate Professor Louis Tan, Senior Consultant, Department of Neurology.

Topics of the day focused on movement and mobility, discussing features of the disease such as tremors, rigidity, poor balance and akinesia. The lively forum even had participants engaged in simple exercises and activities that could enhance mobility for patients.

The event also commemorated the launch of an education booklet written and compiled by multidisciplinary teams from NNI, Singapore General Hospital (SGH), TTSH and PDSS. The book, titled 'Parkinson Disease: A Guide for Patients and Their Families', aims to be a compact and informative handbook to help Parkinson's patients and their caregivers manage and support the condition.



### Patient's Profile

Parkinson patient Mr Oh Keng Seng together with his elder sister and caregiver, Mdm Oh Bee Low.

An ex-delivery man with a teenage son, Mr Oh Keng Seng, 57, was diagnosed with Parkinson Disease (PD) 12 years ago. With the advancement of his disease, he underwent Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) surgery in 2008 for PD symptom control, which helped to improve his quality of life. Due to his deteriorated swallowing function, he also had a percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) tube inserted in 2012 to optimise his nutritional status.

Mr Oh is cared for by Associate Professor Louis Tan and supported by a multidisciplinary team from the National Neuroscience Institute (NNI) and other institutes, consisting of Parkinson trained nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, medical social workers as well as dieticians. He is now attending a physiotherapy programme organised by the Parkinson's Disease Society (Singapore) (PDSS) at Bishan Centre – an outreach programme from NNI – once every two weeks.

Coming from a family of ten, Mr Oh also found immediate familial support around him, including from his devoted eldest sister Bee Low, who is also now his full-time caregiver.

"I truly cannot ask for more help regarding my brother. Everyone from the frontline to backend has done such a great job. The support has been 100% from the team. With this disease, one must learn to accept it and be contented, and we are sincerely grateful for the help that has been rendered to us," shared Bee Low.

To support his medical management, Mr Oh has also received financial assistance for his expenses from Medifund, NNI endowment fund, and the PDSS welfare fund.

"There are times when you feel restricted and without freedom as a caregiver, but with some scheduling I am able to have at least two to three hours a week on my own. Even then, I don't feel too comfortable leaving him alone," Bee Low added with a chuckle.

Now actively engaged, Mr Oh is learning calligraphy as well as *tai chi* and looks forward to more activities where he and his caregiver can socialise and mingle with others. His bi-weekly physiotherapy sessions have been so beneficial that Bee Low wishes that the frequency of the sessions could be increased.

She said, "Physiotherapy has been an important activity for my brother, I hope to be able to take him there at least once a week, instead of once every two weeks."

Of the support received, Bee Low is particularly grateful to Sister Lau Puay Ngoh, who unfortunately recently passed on. Caring for Mr Oh for over 11 years, Sister Lau's efforts remain deeply ingrained in the patient and his caregiver.

"She was someone who has made a lot of sacrifices for her patients. We hope she is resting in peace and we keep her in our memory," Bee Low shared.