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(Left and below)
Clinical Associate
Professor Peter Lu,
Dr Lim Ang Tee and
Dr Mandy Zhang
are part of the team
helping the newly
launched Performing
Arts Medicine Clinic
(PAMC).

The show must go on

Changi General Hospital's new Performing Arts Medicine Clinic aims to meet the specialised healthcare needs of performing artistes.

by Elena Owyong

For many performing artistes who injure themselves during the course of their work, seeking medical treatment is often their last resort.

"When performing artistes visit a healthcare professional, they worry that they may be advised to cut back or to stop performing altogether. For some artistes, performing is their livelihood and is central to their identities," said Dr Mandy Zhang, Consultant, Department of Sport and Exercise Medicine, Changi General Hospital (CGH), and Dance Lead for the Performing Arts Medicine Clinic (PAMC) at the Singapore Sport and Exercise Medicine Centre at Novena Medical Centre.

The PAMC, which opened in December 2021, provides a one-stop multidisciplinary care that aims to support the physical and mental healthcare needs of the performing arts community in Singapore. Similar services are offered at the Singapore Sport and Exercise Medicine at CGH.

Some performing artistes also believe that doctors may not understand the unique demands of their art form. "Dancers train by executing specific movements in their choreographies such as turns and jumps," Dr Zhang explained.

This is where the PAMC can bridge the gap – the healthcare team includes professionals with special interests and background in the performing arts. Dr Zhang, for example, has been exposed to various dance genres and still dances recreationally.

Dr Lim Ang Tee, Consultant, Department of Sport and Exercise Medicine, CGH, and Instrumental Lead for PAMC, is a budding harpist who also plays a plucked seven-string Chinese musical instrument called the guqin; while Clinical Associate Professor Peter Lu, Senior Consultant, Otorhinolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery, CGH, and Voice Lead for PAMC, was involved in setting up CGH's Voice Clinic, which treats and manages voice conditions. Clin Assoc Prof Lu has a special interest in the voice problems of professional singers, actors and media personalities.

Catering to unique needs

The doctors see a mix of professional and recreational artistes at the PAMC.

Like athletes, professional artistes push themselves to perform at the highest standards and continuously hone their craft. Sometimes, this comes at the expense of their physical and mental well-being when they sustain performance-related injuries.

Dr Lim said that injuries are common among instrumentalists, who often spend hours, or even days, practising musical phrases over and over again.

"For performing artistes, their identities are often tied to their careers. When they are unable to perform, many often feel a sense of helplessness," he added.

Similarly, Clin Assoc Prof Lu noted that vocalists commonly suffer from trauma to the vocal cords. Prolonged use of vocal cords and/or singing at high pitches and volumes can result in various voice disorders.

"Recreational performers are very proud of their ability to perform, too. When they lose this ability, it can be a devastating blow," he said.

For performing artistes who have injuries, Clin Assoc Prof Lu urges them to seek help early. Injuries may become chronic conditions and can be more difficult to treat, if left untreated for an extended period.

Since the launch of the clinic, the team has seen an increase in the number of patients. According to Singapore Cultural Statistics 2020, the number of people involved in performing arts interest groups has grown from 37,851 in 2015 to 50,180 in 2019.

The team hopes to raise awareness of the PAMC's services by conducting regular webinars and conferences. There are also plans to work with the Ministry of Education to bring injury prevention and treatment talks to schools.

"Besides the public, we also want the healthcare community to know that we have this service they can refer patients to," said Clin Assoc Prof Lu. "With increased awareness and education, we can offer a holistic healthcare experience for performing artistes and support them on their journey to recovery."



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The PAMC is a one-stop multidisciplinary care that supports the physical and mental healthcare needs of the performing arts community in Singapore.

