

THE

**SUNWAY®**  
HEALTHCARE

# VITALS

ISSUE 2 | JULY-SEPTEMBER 2021

Two hands wearing blue nitrile gloves are positioned to form a heart shape with their fingers. The hands are set against a light blue background. The heart shape is formed by the thumbs and index fingers of both hands, with the middle and ring fingers curled inwards.

## ***MATTERS*** *OF* ***THE HEART***

### [SPOTLIGHT]

At the heart of it all

### [PERSPECTIVE]

Heart attack vs Heart failure |  
Heart or liver - Which to save first?

### [DOCTOR'S ORDERS]

Heart health tips by TCM



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## MESSAGE FROM THE MD

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**W**illiam Shakespeare said, “A good heart ‘is worth gold”. In this issue, we are focusing on matters of the heart.

I have always believed that compassion and empathy are innate qualities or values expected of us healthcare professionals.

At the “heart” of our hospitals, compassion guides our thought processes, behaviours, and actions as we do our utmost in alleviating the physical and psychological distress experienced by our patients.

Meanwhile, being empathetic allows us to immerse ourselves in their struggles. It is through these values that we truly come to discover our patients’ needs.

I would like to take this opportunity to honour two doctors as we showcase their stories that

demonstrated how they have gone beyond the call of duty. It was indeed heart-warming to know doctors with hearts of gold.

While we are at the topic of heart, it is unfortunate that heart disease is still the number one killer in Malaysia.

Therefore, our Cardiologists will touch on some important heart diseases: the difference between heart attack and heart failure, smoking and the heart, etc.

Did you know that our tongue tells a lot about our heart health? Learn how to take better care of your heart from our TCM physicians.

Our Gastroenterologist & Hepatologist from Sunway Medical Centre (Singapore) has an interesting insight about how clinical decisions are made during critical situations. Read on as Dr Thwin talks about whether to save the heart or liver first.

We hope you will find the stories here inspiring and educational at the same time.

From the bottom of my heart, I wish everyone good health, joy, and kindness in your lives.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lau Beng Long".

**Mr Lau Beng Long**  
Managing Director,  
Sunway Healthcare Group





## **AT THE HEART OF IT ALL**

We all know that doctors have gone through a lot, starting from their long medical school years to sacrificing much of their personal lives so that they can save others.

What we don't hear is the experiences doctors go through with their patients, which are the true power of what they do.

There is a saying by Mehmet Murat Ildan, "With a good heart, you can win many battles". Read on as Dr Chye and Dr Tengku Putri share their personal stories that shine a light on the real purpose of their profession.





**Dr Chye Ping Ching**

Consultant Oncology  
Orthopaedic Surgeon  
Sunway Medical Centre  
(Sunway City)

In June 2013, I was in a very long and difficult surgery resecting a rare tumour from the leg of a 6-year-old girl. Halfway through the 12-hour-long surgery, I started feeling pain in my abdomen that continued to intensify.

I knew the signs and symptoms I was feeling pointed to a burst appendix. Nevertheless, it was important that I soldiered on despite the pain as there was no return as far as surgery was concerned.

**It was late by the time surgery was completed. It was my turn as a patient in the operating theatre. I went through a couple of surgeries and lost a long segment of my intestines.**

For one whole month, I was on Total Parenteral Nutrition before my intestines could slowly work again and I was

able to start drinking and eating.

During my own recovery, I was glad that my patient recovered well. I did not feel the need to inform the little girl and her family of the ordeal I went through while saving her leg. For me, the most important thing was my patient's outcome.

Now, I have to take care of what I eat very carefully to avoid chronic diarrhoea. I eat very healthily and I try to cook all my meals. I take this as a blessing in disguise because this lifestyle is definitely healthier.

I thank God that I eventually got better and made it back to work after 3 months. I believe God was telling me that my job was not done, and I needed to go back and continue helping patients.

This experience in my life made me truly understand the pain and despair that patients feel and go through. This has reminded me of how important it is to do my best for my patients always.





### **Dr Tengku Putri Zainab**

Consultant Paediatrician &  
Lactation Consultant  
Sunway Specialist Centre  
Damansara

I had a patient who was 45 years old and had a history of Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). As she was not able to conceive her own child due to infertility issues, she had decided to adopt.

With the baby's arrival in one month, the patient showed her desire to breastfeed as she truly believed in the health benefits of breastfeeding.

As a Paediatrician, I am also an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) and I am able to help with induced lactation.

Inducing lactation is a process a non-pregnant parent can attempt to produce breastmilk to feed their child. Also called adoptive breastfeeding, the process takes considerable dedication and preparation, and it can take weeks or months to see results.

After extensive counselling, she finally agreed to start on the induced lactation protocol, which commenced with hormonal pills. Due to this, she developed high blood pressure, which was one of the side effects.

As she was still keen to continue, I switched her to a different pill, prescribed other medications, and taught her the methods of breast massage as well as frequent milk expression. These are done to mimic the hormonal changes that occur after pregnancy and delivery that trigger the production of breastmilk.

**After about 3 weeks of treatment, my patient was ecstatic when she managed to produce even a few drops of milk!**

Her baby finally arrived. It had been a challenging journey for my patient as her baby was noticeably small size and was admitted several times for jaundice. She almost gave up on breastfeeding.

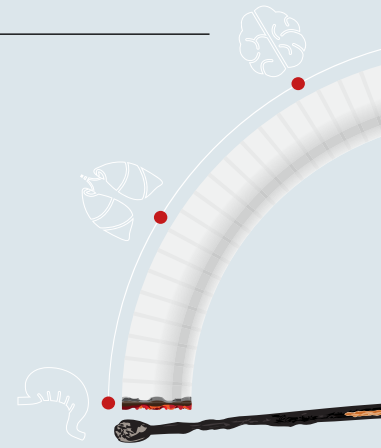
But her determination kept her going despite the obstacles. My patient continued to consult me for breastfeeding advice, and also returned to my clinic for her baby's vaccination.

I am full of joy to see that she has progressed this far in her difficult induced breastfeeding journey. Most importantly, I am just glad that breastfeeding has helped her to bond with her adopted baby.



# Kick The Habit, Save Your Life

## By Sunway Medical Centre (Sunway City)



**According to the World Health Organization (WHO), tobacco accounts for over 7.2 million deaths every year. In Malaysia, approximately 5 million Malaysian adults aged 15 years and above are current smokers, according to the National Institute of Health.**



**Dr Mohd Kamal bin Mohd Arshad**  
Cardiologist  
Sunway Medical Centre  
(Sunway City)

Dr Mohd Kamal bin Mohd Arshad, Cardiologist from Sunway Medical Centre, explains that the chemicals in tobacco smoke cause plaques to build upon the wall of the arteries. “Over time, the plaque hardens and narrows the arteries, limiting the flow of oxygen-rich blood to one’s organs and can lead to chest pain, high blood pressure, heart attack, or even death,” he says.

lungs (specifically the airways and alveoli). The inflammation can then lead to tissue damage in one’s lungs and airways, resulting in a less efficient (gas) exchange.”

In recent years, many smokers have turned to e-cigarettes and vaping as they are deemed a ‘healthier’ option to satisfy their nicotine cravings.

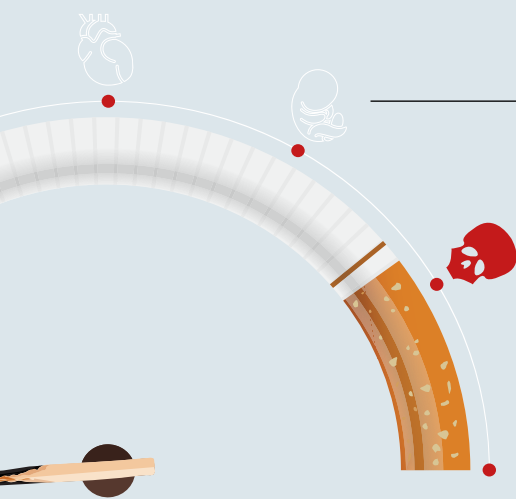


**Dr Kow Ken Siong**  
Respiralogist  
(Internal Medicine)  
Sunway Medical Centre  
(Sunway City)

Furthermore, smoking does not just affect one’s heart but it also has an impact on their lungs. Dr Kow Ken Siong, Respiralogist (Internal Medicine) from Sunway Medical Centre, shares, “Out of the 4,000 chemicals present in cigarette smoke, 69 are carcinogenic (with hundreds more) that can trigger an inflammatory reaction in the

Dr Kow corrects this misconception and shares that e-cigarettes are not a ‘better’ or a ‘healthier’ option. Though they may contain a lesser amount of toxic chemicals, they are just as harmful as regular cigarettes. In many instances, **the nicotine level in e-cigarettes is found to be double that of a conventional cigarette**, and the





## PERSPECTIVE

vapour inhaled can result in a similar type of airway and lung inflammation after a period of time.

Another misconception that Dr Mohd Kamal corrects is the common thought that occasional or social smoking is acceptable and less harmful.

“There is no safe level of exposure to tobacco. Even in small amounts, tobacco smoke still increases health risks. Just smoking 1-4 cigarettes a day doubles your risk of dying from heart disease. Heavy smokers who reduce their number of cigarette consumption daily still have a high risk of heart disease because cutting down is not the same as quitting,” he explains.

Smoking harms nearly every organ in the body, especially the heart and lungs, and reduces the health of smokers in general. However, quitting

can be daunting, especially when smokers have already developed a dependency on it. Many fear that it would take a long time to see improvements in their health and well-being upon quitting smoking, but the timeline for seeing real health benefits is faster than most people realise.

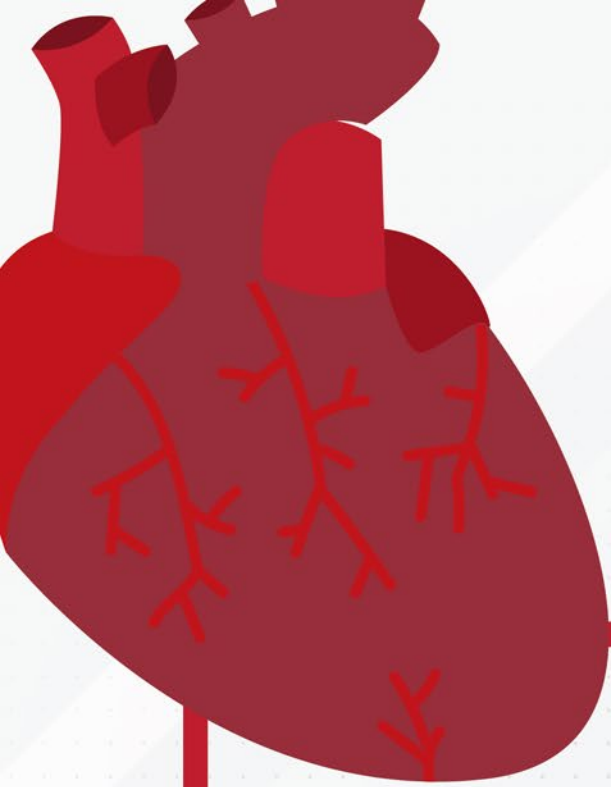
**Did you know that it takes just 20 minutes for a smoker to experience the health benefits of kicking the habit? Within six hours, their blood pressure will decrease, and in 24 hours, their body's blood oxygen level will see an increase as carbon monoxide levels drop.**

In the next 24 hours, the nicotine levels will also drop, causing the ex-smoker to crave a cigarette again – but if they can push through it, they will see a marked improvement in their blood circulation after 12 weeks. In a year, their lung capacity will also increase, and their risk of heart disease drops by a whopping 50%. (usually after 5 years)

The sooner a smoker quits, the higher their chance to reduce the risks of cancer, heart and lung disease, and other health conditions related to smoking. However, it is important to remember that smoking cessation is different for everyone. Nevertheless, personal willpower to quit smoking paired with medical support is crucial and will help see the smoker through a successful cessation.

As Dr Kamal simply puts it, it is never too late to stop smoking. “You can reduce the risk of heart disease just 24 hours of putting out your last cigarette. Yes, withdrawals from smoking will occur, but most people who do stop smoking have testified to feeling happier and better overall – it may be an uphill battle; however, with some encouragement and support it can be done.”





# DO YO

## HEART ATTACK

Sudden reduction or blockage of blood flow that brings oxygen to the heart.

### CAUSES / RISK FACTORS

#### MODIFIABLE

- Smoking
- Diabetes
- Hypertension
- Dyslipidemia
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Stress
- Obesity

#### NON-MODIFIABLE

- Age
- Sex (Male)
- Family history / genetic

### SIGNS / SYMPTOMS

- Chest pain/Tightness/Squeezing (can last for few minutes)
- Shortness of breath on exertion or at rest
- Nausea / vomiting
- Lightheadedness
- Cold sweat

\*Women may have different heart attack symptoms compared to men, e.g. chest pain without pressure, fatigue, indigestion, palpitations, pain in the upper back, arm, neck and jaw.

#### Contributed by



Dr Tee Chee Hian,  
Consultant Cardiologist



Dr Foo Yoke Loong,  
Consultant Cardiologist

by **Sunway Medical Centre  
Velocity (Kuala Lumpur)**





# DO YOU KNOW THE DIFFERENCE?

VS

## HEART FAILURE

Chronic / long-term condition where the heart cannot pump enough blood to meet the needs of the body.

- Coronary artery disease, Hypertension, Valvular heart disease
- Myocarditis , Cardiomyopathy, Congenital heart disease
- Cardiac arrhythmia, Alcohol, Hormone disorder (e.g. hyperthyroidism, etc.)

- Shortness of breath (dyspnea) when you exert yourself or when you lie down
- Fatigue and weakness
- Swelling (edema) in legs, ankles and feet
- Rapid or irregular heartbeat
- Reduced ability to exercise
- Persistent cough or wheezing with white or pink blood-tinged phlegm
- Increased need to urinate at night
- Swelling of abdomen
- Very rapid weight gain from fluid retention
- Lack of appetite and nausea
- Difficulty concentrating or decreased alertness
- Sudden, severe shortness of breath and coughing up pink, foamy mucus
- Chest pain if heart failure is caused by a heart attack



## HEART ATTACK

Sudden reduction or blockage of blood flow that brings oxygen to the heart.

### INVESTIGATIONS

#### ECG

To diagnose which artery is involved

#### Blood test

To check sugar level, cholesterol level etc.

#### ECHO

To assess heart function and structure

### TREATMENTS

#### MEDICATIONS

- Anti platelet
- Cholesterol lowering pill
- Blood sugar control medication
- Betablocker
- High blood pressure medications (ACEi / ARB)
- Antianginal

#### SURGERY

- Angioplasty
- Heart bypass

### PREVENTION



- Stop smoking
- Lower high blood pressure
- Balanced nutrition
- Daily physical activity

It usually takes several weeks for the heart to heal after a heart attack, depending on its damage. The damage caused by a heart attack can lead to heart problems such as heart failure, valve problems, and irregular heart rhythm. With proper treatment and lifestyle changes, it is possible to limit or prevent further damage.



# DO YOU KNOW THE DIFFERENCE?

VS

## HEART FAILURE

Chronic / long-term condition where the heart cannot pump enough blood to meet the needs of the body.

### Stress test

To detect stable coronary artery disease

- ECG
- ECHO
- Cardiac MRI
- Stress test
- Chest X-Ray
- Coronary angiogram
- Cardiac CT coronary angiogram

### MEDICATIONS

- High blood pressure medications (ACEi / ARB)
- ARNI
- Diuretic
- Betablocker

### SURGERY

- CABG
- Heart valve repair or replacement
- Heart transplant
- Implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (ICD)
- Cardiac resynchronisation therapy CRT



- Maintain a healthy weight
- Manage stress
- Manage diabetes
- Limit alcohol

Heart failure is a chronic and progressive condition. It may involve left, right or both sides of the heart. Those with pre-existing heart diseases, high blood pressure, and a history of heart attacks can develop this condition. With proper care and treatment, many patients can live a longer and healthier life.





By Dr Thwin Maung Aye,  
Consultant  
Gastroenterologist &  
Hepatologist  
Sunway Medical Centre  
(Singapore)

## Heart or Liver – WHICH TO SAVE FIRST?

**Everyone knows that medicine is a science, but it can also be an art. Making judgements for an appropriate action, at the right time, to achieve the best possible outcome, requires finesse. Most clinical challenges in daily practice can be overcome by using an evidence-based, multi-disciplinary approach and logically prioritising actions, while balancing individual risks and benefits.**

It was past midnight when I received a call from my colleague consultant from Emergency regarding a patient who came for melaena (black tarry stool) but also had other medical problems. I realised the situation would not be straightforward. He was diabetic, had a stent due to the narrowing of the heart vessel, and was on aspirin. He consumed alcohol moderately. He was jaundiced but was relatively stable currently. His liver function and ECG were abnormal. Treatments as per gastro-intestinal bleeding protocol were advised, and an immediate transfer to Cardiac ICU (CCU) was requested.

First, what should I do safely? Prioritising and balancing risks and benefits for patient safety are paramount qualities for all doctors, and I was glad I had acquired them during my training and career in the UK and Singapore. I knew I needed help from my cardiology colleague to stabilise his heart condition first, so that I could do the scope safely.

Thanks to the CCU team's coordination of family counselling, I had a chance to explain my treatment plan, procedure, and risks and benefits. Endoscopy was safely performed in CCU and bleeding varices were successfully treated by banding. The urgent bleeding issue was settled.





## PERSPECTIVE

I knew I had to advise to stop aspirin intake. It was a risky decision with his abnormal ECG, and without knowledge of the stent's patency, but it would be in his best interests. My cardiology colleague agreed.

Now I started to worry about his heart and liver condition in the next few days. If his liver did not recover, he would need to consider a liver transplant, for which I needed to understand his heart vessels' status by further evaluation. Our liver transplant team would face challenges for transplant planning if he needed more stents.

Fortunately, proper cardiac catheterisation was possible to perform over the next few days because of dramatic improvements and no further bleeding. The stent was patent and there was no narrowing of other heart vessels. Aspirin intake was restarted with appropriate cover. Liver function was gradually improving. Our liver transplant team felt a big relief. Alcohol cessation advice with appropriate support was given. Since then, there have been regular hepatology clinic follow-ups.

Luckily, the whole situation was not as complicated as I first thought. But life is not always like this. What if his liver function got worse, and his cardiac catheterisation indicated he needed more stents? Which organ had to be saved first — heart or liver?

*Disclaimer: The case here is not a real case but is based on common scenarios. Someone with a similar situation would be a coincidence.*

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# Not The Time to GET TONGUE- TIED

## About Your Heart Health

Your tongue provides important clues to your overall health. In Western medicine, a red-coloured tongue like a strawberry may be an indication of deficiency in folic acid, Vitamin B12, or iron. It may also be a sign of strep throat, fever, or Kawasaki disease.

### TONGUE AND HEART FAILURE

According to a research presented by the Heart Failure Association (HFA) of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC), the microbes on your tongue play a role in diagnosing heart failure.

It was noted that heart failure patients have a redder tongue with a yellow coating. Appearance of the tongue changes as the disease becomes more advanced.

### TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE (TCM) PERSPECTIVE

In TCM, the tongue's condition is essential in assessing a patient's health. How is this related to the heart?

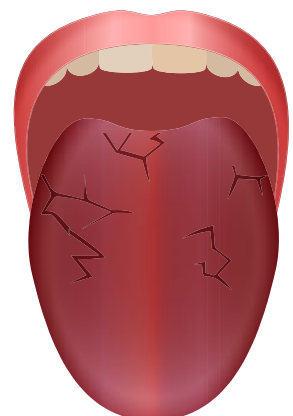
#### Tongue with red tip:

This signals "heat" rising to the heart



#### Tongue that is pale, dark purple or has cracks:

Heart is out of balance, affecting or affected by other organs in the body



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## **Tips from TCM:**

# **“TREAT THE HEAT” & “RESTORE BALANCE TO THE HEART”**

### **1. PRIORITISE REST**

While exercise is good for the heart, in TCM, a peaceful mind and heart and sufficient rest are just as important. Mindfulness practices such as meditation, yoga, qi gong, etc. help to relax your mind and body.

Make an effort to hit the bed before 11pm to improve liver and heart health as this will reduce “heat” from rising to the heart. Practise this good sleep habit and you will see a difference!

### **2. NOURISH YOUR HEART**

TCM Five Element Theory correlates the heart with the colour red. With that, foods that are naturally red in colour are beneficial for the heart. They include tomatoes, berries, beetroot, kidney beans, cherries, hawthorn fruit, and more.

Research also showed that Chinese herb *Salvia miltiorrhiza*, also called Red Sage (dan shen) has an effect on heart and blood vessels' health. However, the amount and suitability depend on the TCM diagnosis by registered TCM physicians.

### **3. MASSAGE THE ACUPRESSURE POINT HEART 7 “SHEN MEN (SPIRIT GATE)”**

Massaging this part of your wrist can help to calm the mind and nourish the heart (blood and Qi).

### **4. LISTEN TO YOUR HEART**

Place your hands gently over your chest or near to your heart. With a slight smile on your face, be grateful to yourself and make a connection with your heart. Do this daily; early in the morning and when you go to bed as it brings a sense of inner peace.

### **5. WATCH YOUR TONGUE!**

Stick out your tongue, look in the mirror, or take a selfie of your tongue! By observing the colour of your tongue, you can use it as a guide to make simple food and lifestyle changes.

**Unable to distinguish or differentiate the colour? Don't worry. Just drop a tongue selfie in Sunway TCM's Facebook page to request for a FREE quick guide.**





*Sunway makes the path to immunisation a little more hopeful.*

Sunway Healthcare Group's flagship hospital, Sunway Medical Centre (SMC), has always been a name that is synonymous with world-class patient experience and state-of-the-art facilities.

When Malaysia's COVID-19 vaccination drive began in February 2021, SMC held itself to the same standards and became a strong proponent of vaccination through its support in the National COVID-19 Immunisation Programme (NCIP).

The onset of SMC's involvement in the NCIP was ascertained when the hospital repurposed its very own SunMed Convention Centre as a vaccination site for front-line health workers across the Petaling District.

This pioneering step paved the way forward for other private healthcare institutions to follow, which then aggregated into a collective effort to mitigate the infection risk of the front-liners from high volumes of COVID-19 hospital admissions.

Before long, SMC was given credence by ProtectHealth to take on public vaccination at SunMed Convention Centre, which since has been declared a private hospital vaccination centre, or its official title, Pusat Pemberian Vaksin Hospital Swasta (PPVHS) from May 2021 onwards.

Mr Bryan Lin, CEO of Sunway Medical Centre, remarked that SMC is honoured to be entrusted by ProtectHealth to serve the nation as it strives to achieve successful nationwide immunisation, with the hospital making gradual efforts to be of greater support to this mission.

Great strides were made yet again when the commodious, home-grown Sunway Pyramid Convention Centre (SPCC) was made available rent-free to perform large-scale vaccine inoculation for the Selangor population, for which ProtectHealth appointed SMC to take Pejabat Kesihatan Daerah Petaling's (PKDP) place as Healthcare Organiser (HCO) effective 21 June 2021.



## UPDATES

Mr Lau Beng Long, Managing Director, Sunway Healthcare Group, noted that PKDP's efforts are not to be dismissed; they were primarily responsible for the inception of the SPCC vaccination centre and for vaccinating over 76,000 of the Selangor population; hence SMC is pleased to continue their excellent work.



PKD Petaling hands a vaccine carrier over to Sunway Medical Centre, symbolising the transfer of responsibility as Healthcare Organiser (HCO) of SPCC PPV.

In June, SPCC was the designated vaccination centre that accommodated 2,600 pregnant women in the KL and Selangor region for their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

The following month, Sunway's network of vaccination centres expanded across its townships outside of Sunway City, with vaccination clinics at Sunway Medical Centre Velocity (KL) and Sunway Specialist Centre Damansara set up to administer hundreds of inoculations daily.

As of end-August 2021, more than 350,000 COVID-19 vaccines have been administered at four (4) vaccination centres managed by subsidiaries of Sunway Healthcare Group – marking an important milestone in its efforts in Malaysia's push for herd immunity.

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## SUNWAY HEALTHCARE GROUP

is a leading integrated private healthcare group in Malaysia. We own and operate Sunway Medical Centre (Sunway City, KL), Sunway Medical Centre Velocity (KL), Sunway Specialist Centre Damansara, Sunway Medical Centre (Singapore), Sunway Home Healthcare and Sunway TCM Centre.

# WE ARE RECRUITING!

**Sunway Medical Centre Seberang Jaya**, our first tertiary hospital in Penang will serve patients in the Northern Region of Malaysia, the neighbouring states and countries from mid-2022. The first phase of the hospital will have 180 beds, 53 outpatient specialist clinics, 6 operating theatres, ICU, NICU, 24-hour A&E department, catheterisation lab, haemodialysis unit, cancer centre, nuclear medicine centre, and more.

### We are looking for Consultant Specialists in the following specialities to join us:

- Anaesthesiology
- Anatomical Pathology
- Arthroscopy & Sports Surgery
- Breast & Endocrine Surgery
- Cardiology
- Cardiothoracic Surgery
- Clinical Haematology
- Clinical Oncology
- Colorectal Surgery
- Dermatology
- Emergency Medicine
- Endocrinology
- ENT, Head & Neck Surgery
- Gastroenterology & Hepatology
- General Surgery
- Geriatric Medicine
- Haematopathology
- Hepatobiliary Surgery
- Infectious Disease
- Intensive Care
- Interventional Radiology
- Neonatology
- Nephrology
- Neurology
- Neurosurgery
- Nuclear Medicine
- Obstetrics & Gynaecology
- Ophthalmology
- Orthopaedic Surgery
- Paediatric Cardiology
- Paediatric Surgery
- Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery
- Psychiatry
- Radiology
- Respiratory Medicine
- Rheumatology
- Spine Surgery
- Upper Gastrointestinal Surgery
- Urology
- Vascular Surgery
- Medical Officers for Emergency Department & Health Screening Centre

## JOIN US!

**Dr Delicia Chua**

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Let us welcome our **new Specialist Consultants** who have joined our healthcare units:

**SUNWAY MEDICAL CENTRE  
(SUNWAY CITY)**



**DR TEOH  
KEAN HOOI**

Consultant Anatomical  
Pathologist



**DR JOHAN  
QUAH BOON LEONG**

Consultant Neurosurgeon

**SUNWAY MEDICAL CENTRE  
VELOCITY (KL)**



**DR KOH  
KHAI LUEN**

Consultant Plastic Surgeon  
(Visiting with Clinics)



**DR NG  
CHEONG KEAT**

Consultant Obstetrician and  
Gynaecologist  
(Visiting without Clinics)

**SUNWAY SPECIALIST CENTRE  
DAMANSARA**



**DR IVAN  
SHEW YEE SIANG\***

Consultant Clinical  
Oncologist

\*This consultant also has clinic sessions in Sunway Medical Centre (Sunway City).



