



National Centre for
Infectious Diseases

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The NCID Gallery launched to deepen community knowledge on infectious diseases

As part of its second anniversary celebration, NCID also commemorated achievements that contributed to the management of COVID-19 in Singapore

1. The NCID Gallery, a space that provides the public with insights into infectious diseases past and present, was launched today by Mr Heng Swee Keat, Deputy Prime Minister and Coordinating Minister for Economic Policies at the National Centre for Infectious Diseases' (NCID) second year anniversary celebration. The gallery is part of NCID's efforts to strengthen engagement with the public for an informed community with deep understanding on infectious diseases. It aims to be a resource for schools and the public to learn about the infectious diseases in Singapore and understand the importance of public vigilance to prevent infections.
2. The public play a key role in breaking the chain of transmission of infectious diseases. The responsibility in curbing the spread of viruses does not rest on the shoulders of public healthcare institutions alone, but requires the collective effort of everyone in the community. The NCID Gallery is one such avenue to forge a strong connection with the public and is an extension of NCID's efforts to engage with the community. Under NCID's training and education function, public education programmes are conducted to increase community awareness of diseases that continue to pose significant risk to public health and have significant impact on the well-being of the population. These include dengue, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), influenza and COVID-19.
3. Consisting of four zones, the first zone of the gallery will introduce visitors to NCID and how its facility and organisation is built to manage both endemic and emerging infectious diseases. The second zone chronicles the history of infectious diseases in Singapore through a timeline, at the same time shedding light on Singapore's approach in the management of such diseases at the time. Current infectious diseases like HIV and tuberculosis are also highlighted in the third zone on public education, and visitors will walk away with knowledge on the role of the community in preventing infections.
4. NCID rose to the task in managing and combating the COVID-19 pandemic since January 2020, just a few months after its official opening in September 2019. A special six-month photo exhibition which highlights NCID's efforts on the frontline against COVID-19 is also included in the gallery. Located in the fourth zone, the photo exhibition takes visitors behind the scenes in the management of COVID-19 made possible through the efforts of NCID

staff and colleagues from other healthcare institutions. It covers the patient journey, diagnostic testing and surveillance, research milestones, staff training, outreach to the community and stories from NCID staff. At its heart, the photo exhibition celebrates the resilience of healthcare workers in the face of the pandemic. Zone four also includes information on NCID's local and global partnership networks. They are key to NCID's collaborative approach in managing infectious diseases.

5. Just as Singapore has evolved over the years, so has infectious diseases. At the gallery, visitors will be able to journey from 1913 when the first infectious diseases hospital in Singapore was opened till today. Key milestones Singapore has witnessed in tackling infectious diseases for over one century are showcased. With its roots as an entrepot trade hub, Singapore was not spared from pandemics. For example, as early as 1918 the global influenza pandemic reached Singapore and a smallpox outbreak occurred in 1921-1922. In 1958-1959, Singapore had its largest polio outbreak with over 400 cases, mostly in children below 5. In the recent years, Singapore has learnt to live with malaria, dengue and also managed the SARS outbreak. This puts us in better stead in the management of COVID-19 and to tackle diseases of the future. The NCID Gallery will be open to the public from 8 September, Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4.30pm. Admission is free.
6. Professor Leo Yee Sin, Executive Director of NCID said, "SARS-CoV-2 is here to stay and the threat of new SARS-CoV-2 variants and unknown pathogens are a reality that we need to contend with. As Singapore prepares to progressively transition to COVID-19 endemic phase and to take on future challenges of countering unknown emerging pathogens, measures to defend and protect ourselves from these pathogens require the efforts and resilience of everyone in the community. Thus, providing knowledge on preventing the spread of infectious diseases and building community preparedness for outbreaks are key aspects of public education. The NCID Gallery is one avenue for us to work hand in hand with the community."

NCID's key achievements in its second year

7. In the second year since its official opening in September 2019, NCID's multidisciplinary team continued to work together on outbreak response and contributed to the national response to COVID-19. NCID cares for approximately one-third of COVID-19 cases admitted to hospitals with the readiness to respond to any surge in cases. The role of the COVID-19 Therapeutic Workgroup in evaluating and recommending the use of existing and novel therapeutics to treat patients with COVID-19 infection continue to be key in optimal management of cases to achieve a low mortality rate. Comprising of infectious disease clinicians and specialists in various disciplines from various public healthcare institutions, pharmacists, and also representatives from the Health Sciences Authority, the workgroup constantly updates the Treatment Guidelines for COVID-19. The 7th update was released in July 2021.
8. Research is another key element as it provides a basis for evidence-based policy decisions and patient management. From September 2020 to June 2021, NCID led or co-authored 45 peer-reviewed research papers on COVID-19 published in scientific publications. Of which, eight were featured in top journals such as New England Journal of Medicine, British Medical Journal, Lancet Infectious Diseases, and Nature Communications. NCID's research described the altered biological and clinical

characteristics of the Delta variant, and the differences between infection in vaccinated and unvaccinated cases. These findings strongly supported vaccination and aided in right siting and management of cases. NCID's collaborative work further demonstrated the risk of transmission through routine activities such as talking and singing. The latest discovery of cross protection of sarbecovirus published in New England Journal of Medicine pointed towards hope of new vaccine and therapeutic development.

Celebrating resilience of the nursing workforce

9. The top three winners of the Heroes Amongst Us video competition were also announced at the second anniversary celebration. The winners from Sengkang Community Hospital, Woodlands Health and National Kidney Foundation received their award from Mr Heng. Organised by the NCID nursing department as part of Nurses' Day, the competition celebrates the dedication of the nursing workforce in Singapore, as evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. The competition which was open to all healthcare institutions¹ in Singapore required participants to submit a video that demonstrated nurses as everyday heroes in the face of outbreak management. Thirty-eight entries were received and cash prizes of S\$2000, S\$1500 and S\$800 were awarded to the 1st Place, 1st Runner-Up and 2nd Runner-Up respectively.

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About the National Centre for Infectious Diseases

The National Centre for Infectious Diseases (NCID) is a purpose-built facility designed to strengthen Singapore's capabilities in infectious disease management and prevention. NCID houses clinical services, public health, research, training and education and community engagement functions under one overarching structure. In addition to the clinical treatment of infectious diseases and outbreak management, the expanded roles and functional units of NCID include the National Public Health and Epidemiology Unit, the National Public Health Laboratory, the Infectious Disease Research and Training Office, the Antimicrobial Resistance Coordinating Office, and the National Public Health programmes for HIV and Tuberculosis. Benchmarked to international standards and best practices, NCID will enhance Singapore's ability to effectively manage infectious diseases.

Visit www.ncid.sg for more information.

¹ Healthcare Institutions may include Government restructured hospitals, Private hospitals, Nursing homes, Community Hospitals, Polyclinics and Dialysis centres.