

OUR PEOPLE

NDC believes staff development is an important pillar for retaining its best talents. In addition to training to keep clinical skills up-to-date, the Centre fully supports clinicians who choose to pursue other training and research activities that are aligned to its vision of developing an academic medical centre.

Last year, three NDC clinicians were conferred PhDs. In total, four members of NDC's clinical staff have earned their PhDs in the past two years. In addition, three other NDC clinicians are currently working on their PhDs.

The Centre conducted its second employee opinion survey in February 2010. NDC recognises outstanding staff who contribute to the centre. It gave out 30 Long Service awards and put up patient compliments in public spaces and on the intranet.

As a caring employee, NDC also ensures that its staff wellness programme actively targets improvements in the overall physical and mental health of staff.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

NDC continues to help make dentistry possible for the financially needy by funding their treatments through its Patient Welfare and Tooth Fairy Funds as well as direct remissions. In FY2009, we disbursed over \$188,000 which benefitted 683 patients. Funding came from the SingHealth Foundation, the Singapore Totalisator Board and the Centre.

Within the SingHealth cluster, NDC was the lead institution organising the SingHealth President's Challenge 2009 fundraising campaign to raise money for the President's charities. The Cluster raised a total of \$300,000 for this cause.

KEY FIGURES

	FY 09	FY 08
Workload per annum		
Day Surgeries	6,461	6,464
Dental Attendances	160,884	165,234
Dental Procedures	164,475	157,868

Staffing (as at end Mar)

	FY 09	FY 08
Total	329	337
Dentists	79	78
Nurses	13	14
Allied Health Professionals	43	43
Dental Surgery Assistants	55	58
Others	139	145

Note: Staffing figures refer to Filled Posts, in terms of Full-Time Equivalent, and may not add up to total due to rounding. No. of Dentists excludes Dental Officers deployed to arm forces, schools and polyclinics as well as postgraduate residents.

AWARDS & ACCOLADES

Excellent Service Awards 2007
7 staff – 2 gold, 5 silver



BEHIND EVERY PATIENT

NATIONAL DENTAL CENTRE SINGAPORE ANNUAL REPORT 2009



"NDC's focus in FY09/10 was on improving patient safety and strengthening clinical governance. From reviewing existing practices, setting and implementing new standards to rigorously auditing them, our common goal is to improve the way we deliver safe and effective dental care for our patients.

In December 2010, we will benchmark our standards of care against the world's finest medical institutions when we undergo the accreditation exercise by the Joint Commissions International board. For our patients and their families, this gives them further confidence to entrust their oral health to us.

Our staff continue to search out ways to coordinate care and shorten waiting. A major priority was to achieve this for patients with complex needs such as heart or cancer conditions. Our clinical outcomes information is published on our website to help patients make healthcare provider decisions.

We continue to put in every effort to build a culture that retains our best talents. Staff development is an emphasised value at NDC and staff have many opportunities to develop throughout their career with us. We believe that by integrating continuing training and research into our clinical service, we will improve the standard of care we deliver.

We will always place our patients at the heart of all we do."

Dr Kwa Chong Teck
Executive Director, National Dental Centre Singapore

PATIENT CARE

Patients are the focus at the National Dental Centre of Singapore (NDC) and the Centre has engaged in projects and activities to improve the way they are cared for.

Dental clearance is a necessary step to better manage the long-term oral effects of radiotherapy and to prevent dangerous bacterial infections following heart surgery. In July 2009, the NDC completed a project to improve treatment scheduling for patients who need urgent dental clearance before undergoing radiotherapy or heart surgery.

Previously, patients would come to NDC clinics right after their medical appointments. Without prior appointments but needing urgent care, these patients received treatment in between pre-appointed patients. This led to wait times which were longer for the latter group. If the patient required extensive dental treatment over a number of visits, this would sometimes lead to delays in the patient's surgery and radiotherapy.

To address this problem, the referring institutions now call NDC for a same-day appointment for the patient. We also made more treatment slots available to this group of patients. As a result, walk-ins were reduced by 80 per cent and all patients benefited from fewer disruptions and waiting. Almost all referred patients now have their dental clearance either the same day or the following day.

NATIONAL DENTAL CENTRE SINGAPORE

Mr Alvin Yip, 24, was born with a bilateral cleft lip and palate. Initially treated by and operated on at SGH, he was then referred to NDC when he was 8 years old for orthodontics to manage his ongoing dental development as he was growing up. With him is Dr Kwa Chong Teck, Executive Director of NDC.



NATIONAL DENTAL CENTRE SINGAPORE

NDC also completed another project in March 2010 to coordinate appointments for implant patients recalled one year after treatment. Previously, these patients had to make two separate visits to NDC, first to see the prosthodontist and subsequently, the periodontist. To improve care coordination, NDC introduced a new electronic alert system for appointment listing staff to customise the booking. The improvements in clinical-operations communication has resulted in greater convenience for patients and time savings for clinicians.

NDC tracks clinical indicators for commonly performed dental procedures as part of an overall programme for managing clinical quality. NDC published two indicators on its website in the year – unplanned returns following surgery for impacted wisdom teeth extraction and unplanned returns following fillings. This is in line with MOH's drive to have all public healthcare institutions benchmark themselves and thus empower patients with information.

In January 2010, the Paediatric Dentistry Unit started a new Infant Oral Health Clinic targeted at parents and caregivers to improve their awareness of Early Childhood Caries, a dental disease that can easily transmit from caregivers to infants. The clinic's services include detailed assessments for the child and caregiver to determine their risk of getting and passing on dental decay. We plan preventive or interceptive strategies with the goal of improving the child's future dental development.

To raise awareness of service standards, NDC organised a customised workshop in September 2009 for nursing and frontline staff. We designed a workshop "Service Quality, The NDC Way" using feedback gathered from the annual MOH Patient Satisfaction Survey. 114 nursing and frontline staff completed the training. Using practical scenarios, they learnt the need for good customer service, how to build rapport with customers, how to deal with difficult customers and how to build an action plan for delivering good customer service.

In August 2009, NDC began a project to convert plaster orthodontic records to 3D-digital records. The project solves the dual challenge of saving space with an ever-increasing records pool and meeting record archival needs. We expect that retrieving virtual models and analyzing them will become more efficient when digitisation is complete. The project also paves the way for integrating these records into NDC's future Electronic Dental Records system.

NATIONAL DENTAL CENTRE SINGAPORE

Mdm Yeo Choon Huan, 65, needed help because her 10-year-old dentures would not fit anymore. She could not get conventional dentures because of a medical condition with her lower jaw. A team of doctors at NDC worked together to fit her with implants that could anchor an overdenture instead. Today, she is able to enjoy her favourite foods again. With her is Dr Teoh Khim Hean Senior Consultant from the Department of Restorative Dentistry Prosthodontic Unit, one of the doctors who took care of her.



NATIONAL DENTAL CENTRE SINGAPORE

EDUCATION

NDC is the leading provider of education for dental practitioners in Singapore. The clinical departments at NDC organised 229 hours of educational activities last year. These included special workshops on conebeam CT diagnostics, periodontal considerations in implant treatment and minimal intervention dentistry.

NDC is an accredited clinical training Centre for the National University of Singapore (NUS) to prepare candidates for examinations leading to the award of Masters in Dental Surgery degrees by NUS. Our senior clinician supervisors continuously put in their time and expertise to nurture and mentor the dental specialists of tomorrow.

NDC is also an accredited training centre for the National ITE Certification programmes for dental assisting and dental technology. In May 2010, 11 NDC-sponsored trainees graduated from the second intake of the NITEC in Dental Assisting Programme. We also enrolled nine new trainees for the NITEC in Dental Technology course.

The Centre's ACORN Secretariat continues to develop its structure to better support the education and research needs of the Centre.

RESEARCH

At NDC, research efforts continue to expand. The scale and scope of research projects have expanded from pilot to theme-based projects and from observational to clinical trials, animal and laboratory-based projects.

NDC managed to secure \$1.3 million in research grants and awards last year. Currently there are 32 ongoing research projects, of which three are thematic research programmes: on Mandibular Reconstructions, on PCL Biodegradable Scaffolds and on Tissue Regeneration.

Research in NDC is PhD focused and researchers have the opportunity to obtain their PhD while participating in research.

On 12 March 2010, NDC organised the 2010 Research Day with the theme 'Bioengineering – Opportunity for Synergy'. This event promoted scientific exchanges between researchers and also showcased the current applications in bioengineering.

We improved our dedicated research facility set up in Dec 2008 with financial support from the National Medical Research Council. The lab is able to support research on molecular, immunological, histological, cell tissue culture and ion chromatography analysis.