

MEDIA RELEASE

Singapore Cancer Society Expands Public Education and Outreach Efforts with the Virtual SCS Interschool Competition 2021

- The fifth SCS Interschool Competition Finals held online
- 54 ITE, Diploma and Undergraduate students from 10 local institutions participated in the fifth annual Singapore Cancer Society Interschool Competition

Singapore, 29 May, 2021: The fifth annual Singapore Cancer Society (SCS) Interschool Competition finals was held today virtually. The virtual event was officiated by Guest-of-Honour, Mr Alvin Tan, Minister of State, Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, and Ministry of Trade and Industry.

The competition gathered 54 students from ITE, Diploma, and Undergraduate students from 10 local institutions such as the Institute of Technical Education (Central, College West and East), Management Development Institute of Singapore, Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, Republic Polytechnic, Singapore Institute of Technology, Singapore University of Social Sciences, Singapore Institute of Management, and Temasek Polytechnic.

Since its inception in 2016, the Singapore Cancer Society Interschool Competition has provided an opportunity for students to conceptualise and present campaigns on health issues pertaining to tobacco usage, human papillomavirus (HPV) and cancer.

This year, Diploma and ITE students focused on developing a campaign video for “Tobacco and Cancer” and Undergraduates focused on the topic of “HPV and Cervical Cancer”. The top teams shared their campaigns with a panel of judges, and the selected winning team, was given the opportunity to execute their project with SCS.

“Youth engagement has always been core to our education efforts. With growing cancer incidences in Singapore, SCS strives to upscale cancer outreach programmes (such as education & screening) and upstream cancer prevention work (healthy lifestyle, anti-tobacco and HPV vaccination). Partnering with local institutions, SCS reaches out and expands public education and outreach efforts to instill knowledge and empower youths to step up and join in the fight against cancer. Competitions as such, enables us to harness students’ creativity and create a life-long impact on the future of community engagement,” said Geraldyn Lim, COO, Singapore Cancer Society.

¹ <https://www.hpb.gov.sg/docs/default-source/default-document-library/national-population-health-survey-2019.pdf>

² <https://www.singaporecancersociety.org.sg/images/publications/cancer-focus/Cancer-Focus-2018-vol-1.pdf>

SCS outreach ranges from preschool all the way to tertiary institutions. To address the needs at different stages, different talks and programmes were introduced. In 2020, interactive virtual talks and activities were conducted reaching out to more than 4,500 students from preschoolers up to secondary school level students. The topics included smoking, lung cancer, HPV vaccination, and cervical cancer.

Anti-smoking

Smoking is known as the largest single preventable cause for early death and disease in most developed nations including Singapore. The harms of smoking have been well established over the years by studies confirming the cause-effect association of smoking incidence to major health impacts such as lung cancer, and cardiovascular disorder.

According to the Singapore Cancer Registry Annual Report in 2018, the ranking for lung cancer has dropped from second to third place under the most common diagnosis in Singapore. However, a local survey in 2019¹ has found that Singaporeans are starting to smoke at a younger age before the age of 21 years old.

The understanding and knowledge behind the determinants of smoking in adolescents is crucial for SCS to develop effective campaigns and interventions targeting the at risk groups. Based on an SCS survey², peer to peer advocacy has found to have far reaching benefits on reaching out to the at-risk population or younger age group.

As part of SCS's ongoing efforts to enhance public health and reduce smoking prevalence in Singapore, the competition aims to bring greater awareness about the ill effects of smoking, through novel ideas, and encourages them to take charge and be a positive influence to their peers as 'Smoke-free Ambassadors'; influencing them to quit or not pick up smoking.

Latisha Sonia, whose team from Republic Polytechnic clinched the Diploma/ITE Category Overall Award, said, "Taking part in this competition and seeing all the other incredible entries has brought us different perspectives on smoking and lung cancer. We are very thankful for this opportunity."

Latisha's teammate, Budimann Hakeem Bin Mohamed Amin, added, "We want the audience to bring home the message of how dangerous and addictive smoking is and its impact on cancer. We hope to bring this message across to our loved ones on a personal level."

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HPV and Cervical Cancer

Cervical cancer is the 10th most common cancer among Singaporean women, and in 2014 to 2018, the 10th most common cause of cancer death. While Pap test and HPV test screening has been an effective measure in the early detection of cervical cancer, cervical cancer prevention can be prevented through HPV vaccination. Based on an SCS survey, it was found that those in the age range of 19-26 are more receptive towards HPV vaccination.

Responding to the need for structured outreach and education, SCS launched a dedicated HPV Education and Immunisation Programme in 2018. This programme aims to raise greater awareness of cervical cancer prevention and to encourage girls aged 9-26 years to go for HPV vaccination.

To further expand the outreach to the youths, SCS introduced this topic to last year's competition. The competition will drive greater awareness about HPV and cervical cancer prevention and increased vaccine take-up among females in Singapore, particularly females aged 9 to 26 years old. The competition also aims to encourage more ladies to be vigilant of the signs and to go for regular cervical cancer screening when eligible.

Dalilah Binte Abu Bakar, whose team from Management Development Institute of Singapore clinched the Undergraduate Category Overall Award, said, "Due to prevailing issues like HPV, we thought, why not create some awareness? We also learnt that 8 out 10 people get HPV at one point of their lives. With HPV being a taboo topic in Singapore, we challenged ourselves to step out of our comfort zones to speak up and create a movement."

The full event can be viewed at:

https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=374464033991635&ref=watch_permalink

¹ <https://www.hpb.gov.sg/docs/default-source/default-document-library/national-population-health-survey-2019.pdf>

² <https://www.singaporecancersociety.org.sg/images/publications/cancer-focus/Cancer-Focus-2018-vol-1.pdf>

The winners of the SCS Interschool Competition 2021 are:

Diploma/ITE Category People Choice's award: Melody Goh and Yuvaraj S/O Sivarajan from ITE College West



Diploma/ITE Category Overall Winner: Latisha Sonia, Budimann Hakeem Bin Mohamed Amin and Gajeto Alyssa from Republic Polytechnic



Undergraduate Category People Choice's award: Kenneth Mah, Yan Pei Ling and Yew Chin Ning from Singapore Institute of Technology



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Diploma/ITE Category Overall Winner: Yasmin Raine ZA, Dalilah Binte Abu Bakar and Aubrey Ong Sze Min from Management Development Institute of Singapore



The winning teams were chosen by the panel of judges:

- Dr Wong Seng Weng, Medical Director & Consultant Medical Oncologist, The Cancer Centre (Singapore Medical Group)
- Dr Lim Li Min, Associate Consultant, Division of Gynaecologic Oncology, Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, National University Hospital, and National University Cancer Institute, Singapore
- Teo Ya Chih, Deputy Director, Substance Abuse & Preventive Health Programmes, Health Promotion Board
- Adrian Kang, Youth change makers – curator, National Youth Council
- Anand A.Vathiyar, Managing Director Cheil, Singapore

The following are the prize categories:

All students who have submitted their entries will be given a certificate of participation

Diploma/ITE	Undergraduates
Solo / Team (Maximum 3 Pax) Overall winner: \$1,200 Shopping vouchers	Solo / Team (Maximum 3 pax) Overall winner: \$1,200 Shopping vouchers
People's Choice award: \$500 Shopping vouchers	People's Choice award: \$500 Shopping vouchers

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About Singapore Cancer Society (www.singaporecancersociety.org.sg)

Established in 1964, Singapore Cancer Society is a self-funded voluntary welfare organisation which provides patient care services to needy cancer patients through its welfare, hospice home care, cancer treatment subsidy and rehabilitation support programmes. In addition, the Society also provides free cancer screening services and promotes cancer awareness and prevention through its public education and community outreach programmes.

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