



Ms Tang Yue (right), a senior physician with Eu Yan Sang, has spent 18 hours attending courses since November to expand her TCM knowledge. PHOTO: YEO KAI WEN

Eu Yan Sang Academy joins training pool

Poon Chian Hui

Ms Tang Yue, 45, has her hands full treating patients at the Eu Yan Sang Premier TCM Centre at Paragon Medical.

Yet, the traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) physician has spent about 18 hours in the classroom since November, attending courses to brush up on her knowledge.

The effort was not in vain as some of it has turned out to be useful in her practice.

"I gained the most insights from the topics of cancer management," said the senior physician, who has more than 20 years of experience.

She recalled how, after a professor shared her experience in using a particular prescription to increase patients' white blood cell counts after chemotherapy, she did the same and saw her patients fare better.

"I used some of the herb combinations for my patients and noticed from their blood count reports that

their white blood cell count increased," said Ms Tang.

She also went for sessions on recurrent miscarriage, uterine bleeding and infertility.

These courses were held at Eu Yan Sang Academy, one of the newest players to offer approved Continuing TCM Education (CTE) courses. These are co-organised with accredited training providers.

But the academy is not for profit, said Mr Richard Eu, group chief executive officer of Eu Yan Sang International. Any profits or surpluses go back to its operations, he said.

Under the voluntary CTE programme by the Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners Board, practitioners can claim credit points for attending approved training events.

These points are recorded by the board. There are 13 TCM academic institutions accredited as training providers for this national scheme.

Since Eu Yan Sang Academy was incorporated in June last year, at

least 207 physicians have attended courses - 111 of its own staff, and 96 external physicians.

It has also partnered the Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine to offer some training programmes.

Ms Caryn Peh, managing director of clinic services, noted that patients are now more educated and, at the same time, more accepting and aware of TCM.

"Expectations are also rising. We feel that elevating standards is the way to go. Development and education is the key, and this is where the academy comes in," she said.

Medical doctors are also welcome to attend its courses.

"Another objective of the academy is to reach out to Western doctors - to demystify TCM," she said.

This way, patients can benefit from both fields of medicine. For example, TCM can help to alleviate the side effects of chemotherapy.

"It leads to a better quality of life for patients," said Ms Peh.

Currently, TCM is considered complementary medicine in Singapore. Medical certificates issued by TCM physicians, for example, are generally not accepted in the public sector and educational institutions.

Clinics offering TCM are also not part of the Community Health Assist Scheme, which allows lower- and middle-income households to get subsidised care at participating general practices and dental clinics.

Besides training professionals, the academy has rolled out health and wellness courses for the public since Aug 18.

These modules cover basic concepts of TCM that people can apply in their daily lives, such as to prevent or cope with certain ailments.

Fees range from \$540 for one elective to \$1,080 for three electives.

An elective, which covers a broad topic like diet or beauty, consists of three sessions lasting three hours per session.

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