

Coming Together To Tackle Metabolic Diseases In Women And Children

KKH gathers Asian key opinion leaders at the first Singapore Diabetes in Pregnancy Conference towards the expansion of research and collaboration for the management of metabolic diseases in women and children.



Guest-of-honour, Dr Amy Khor, Senior Minister of State for Health (left), receives a token of appreciation from Prof Tan Kok Hian, Chairman of the organising committee of the inaugural Singapore Diabetes in Pregnancy Conference.

In January 2018, KK Women's and Children's Hospital (KKH) organised the inaugural Singapore Diabetes in Pregnancy Conference, where key members from the KKH-led Integrated Platform for Research in Advancing Metabolic Health Outcomes in Women and Children (IPRAMHO), in partnership with the SingHealth Polyclinics and National Healthcare Group Polyclinics, met with members from the Maternal and Fetal Medicine Committee of the Asia and Oceania Federation of Obstetrics and Gynaecology to discuss extending the reach of IPRAMHO to countries in Asia and Oceania with high rates of gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM) and Type 2 Diabetes. The new network aims to achieve a consensus of metabolic health screening approaches in countries in Asia and Oceania.

Senior Minister of State for Health, Dr Amy Khor, graced the two-day conference, which brought together over 200 clinicians, healthcare professionals and nurses and more than 20 key opinion leaders from Australia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

"The conference was a great opportunity for discussion and the forging of collaborations on education and research into GDM, obesity and metabolic diseases among the regional leaders," shares Professor Tan Kok Hian, Head and Senior Consultant, Perinatal Audit and Epidemiology Unit, Department of Maternal Fetal Medicine, KKH, who is also the Chairman of the organising committee of the conference.

CLINICAL GUIDELINES LAUNCHED ON MANAGING GESTATIONAL DIABETES IN SINGAPORE

During the conference, the College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, Singapore also launched the nation's first clinical guidelines on managing GDM in pregnant women in Singapore – a metabolic disease with one of the highest incidence rates in Singapore.

The new guidelines recommend universal screening for GDM by 75gram Oral Glucose Tolerance Test between 24 to 28 weeks of a woman's gestation, and the adoption of the three-point International Association of Diabetes and Pregnancy Study Groups (IADPSG) criteria for diagnosing GDM.

KKH led in the development of the guidelines, which aim to guide obstetricians and gynaecologists in providing evidence-based care to pregnant women in Singapore.

Metabolic diseases such as obesity and diabetes are global issues in public health. Singapore has one of the highest incidences of GDM worldwide; based on current statistics, it is estimated that more than 6,000 pregnant women suffer from GDM each year, of whom more than 4,000 will develop diabetes in their lifetime.

In July 2017, KKH launched the IPARAMHO network to advance translational research in metabolic health in women and children, and spur collaboration between hospitals and primary healthcare providers to better prevent and manage metabolic diseases in Singapore. In September 2017, the 'Temasek Foundation Cares GDM Care' programme was also introduced in KKH, which aims to pilot a novel model of care encouraging all pregnant women receiving antenatal care at the hospital to undergo GDM screening, and receive appropriate antenatal and postnatal care and follow-up to track and manage their diabetes condition.

"We are seeing encouraging results through KKH's initiatives; by working with our regional counterparts, we hope to discover new evidence-based, effective and affordable interventions that could provide early prevention and detection for metabolic diseases such as GDM in high-risk patient groups," says Prof Tan.