Volunteers give patients a helping hand

At TTSH, they teach patients how to apply eye drops and record eye-drop schedule

Felicia Choo

At Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH), volunteers have been helping some of the lead off healthcare staff amid manpower crunch.

At TTSH Eye Clinic, 76 volunteers helped out at the hospital’s eye clinic, giving patients pointers for their visual field tests, recording their glaucoma eye-drop schedule and demonstrating the correct way to apply eye drops.

The volunteers, aged 45 to 76, are part of pilot volunteer programme by TTSH’s Hospital Elder Life Programme and the In-patient Total Knee Replacement Volunteer Programme.

The three volunteer programmes came under TTSH’s Centre for Health Activation, which was launched jointly by the Ministry of Health’s Second Permanence and Changi General Hospital’s volunteer programme.

The centre is the training and research hub which aims to recruit volunteers to work in para-clinical areas alongside healthcare staff as well as empower patients and caregivers to support other patients.

At the eye clinic, the volunteers were also taught to address issues encountered by patients before the pilot began.

The volunteers’ involvement found to be applying eye drops incorrectly. The eye clinic sees 110 patients at the eye clinic were encountered, with 50 per cent of the patients failing to follow the volunteers’ involvement.

Glaucoma patient Siow Sau, 76, finds the volunteers’ very helpful. “Most of them are very well versed in the information they are sharing,” said the retired administrative assistant.

The volunteers were either recruited or selected from TTSH’s 700-strong volunteer pool.

They had to be assessed on their competency, such as whether they asked patients appropriate questions to ask follow-up questions, said Dr Owen Lee, a nurse supervisor at TTSH’s medical oncology department.

The volunteers underwent training before the pilot began.

A framework for accountability was established.

Volunteer Molly Lim, 65, finds helping in advising patients on how to apply eye drops and recording their glaucoma eye-drop schedule as fulfilling in advising patients on how to apply eye drops and recording their glaucoma eye-drop schedule.

The volunteers also assist in registering patients for their general safety.

Volunteer Molly Lim gives advice to Mr Cheong Chue Wan, a patient at TTSH Eye Clinic. ST PHOTO: NG SOR LUAN

Meanwhile, the National University Hospital is recruiting volunteers to help patients with language translation during consultations or in an eye clinic, besides helping patients with their health-related queries.

The volunteers are being trained to play their part.

Feedback from patients has been encouraging, with 93 per cent of the 110 polled welcoming the volunteers’ involvement.

Online shopping website Lazada has stopped the sale of silicone bongs – some pipes typically used for smoking weed – after they were found to be used for drug activity.

In a statement to The Straits Times on Thursday, a Lazada spokesperson said they “do not allow for any products that are not legal in Singapore to be available on our site.”

The sale of the items was highlighted earlier this week in the Redd online forum, using keywords such as “bongs” and “smoke”.

Checks by The Straits Times found that a search on “silicone bong” yielded at least five listings on Lazada.

Lazada stops sale of pipes for smoking weed

AdimLee

The bongs were priced between $7 and $8, and came in different colours.

Said a Lazada Singapore spokesman: “We do not approve of the sale of anything that is not legal in Singapore and is not available for sale.

The sale of these items was also expanded to include the sale of silicone bongs, pipes and other products.

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