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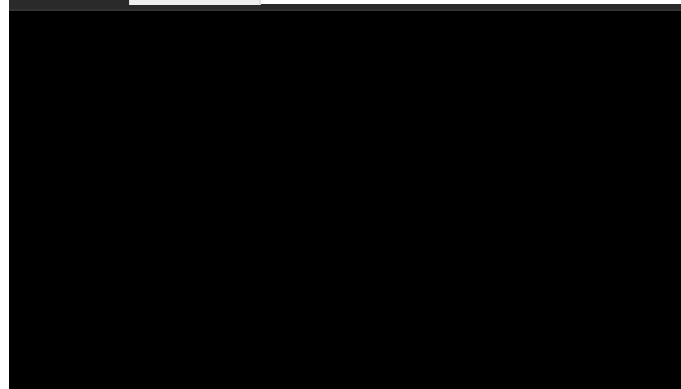
SIT students to help improve eldercare at Kwong Wai Shiu Hospital

This comes after both organisations signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Saturday (Nov 21).

By Hetty Musfirah Abdul Khamid, Channel NewsAsia

POSTED: 21 Nov 2015 23:45 UPDATED: 22 Nov 2015 01:15

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SINGAPORE: Students from the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) will help improve eldercare at Kwong Wai Shiu Hospital, which is being redeveloped to become Singapore's largest single-site nursing home in 2017, after both organisations signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Saturday (Nov 21).

The organisation also signed an MOU with HCA hospice care to improve nursing home services.

Currently, patients perform heel raises to strengthen muscles around the ankles, with a physiotherapist making a visual estimate of whether the patients have raised their heels high enough.

A device, which is equipped with sensors, helps to provide a more accurate analysis of the exercise outcomes. As patients perform heel raise exercises, the device can track and record data, allowing a therapist to better understand the patient's capability.

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The device is just one innovation by SIT students, and more of them can be expected to help with patient rehabilitation.

Health Minister Gan Kim Yong said the hospital's new facilities will provide an ideal environment for seniors to recuperate.

Among them are features targeted at dementia patients. These include a "memory street", which reconstructs a typical street scene from the 1960s to revive fond memories, and a garden designed to stimulate the senses.

"We are working with them to think about how we can design a garden that can help dementia patients. And again, it will be very multidisciplinary. It will involve occupational therapists, physiotherapists, mechanical students who would have put in the various sensors, IT students which will have to capture the information, plus different strategies to help dementia patients and these will require design students. Many of our projects will be of that nature," said Professor Tan Thiam Soon, President, SIT.

Keong Wai Shiu Hospital CEO Dr Ow Chee Chung explained how these features would be beneficial for patients.

"There's a structured path for them to move. This is important for dementia patients because if the garden is too open, they will get confused, they may get lost, and after that they don't feel safe," said Dr Ow.

"We make use of multi-sensory elements as part of the rehab, so in the garden, there are different stations. Each station will look at different elements for patients - some might be the sensory touch of the hands, sensory touch of the leg, some are sights and sounds. The elderly will then do their rehab by different stations. We really hope with this, the patients will get better care. We believe we will help some of them even improve in their condition, but what is more important for most of them, we hope by doing this, we can at least maintain whatever condition they are in now at the moment," he added.

- CNA/dl

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