

# BULLETIN

Monthly News from JCSMHS

“Are we creating digital doctors?”, an intrusive, ruminative thought that has frequently haunted my conscience. The impact of COVID-19 on medical education is unprecedented, extensive throughout all years of medical education, has definitely presented unique challenges to medical schools. The foundational consideration of adaptations in medical education during the pandemic is to embrace and ensure the safety and well-being of students in the context of teaching patient-centered care. Based on that fundamental intention, much of medical education around the world has been converted online.

## MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY HEAD OF CSJB (EDUCATION)



Sir William Osler once quoted, “Medicine is learned by the bedside and not in the classroom”. Can clinical medicine then be taught effectively online? This has been a decade-long perennial debate among medical educators. Despite the evidence that videoconferences are non-inferior to face-to-face education, can online teaching substitute teaching in a clinical environment? Since the pandemic, more than 60% of curriculum delivery has been modified. There have been immense innovations in the delivery of the medical curriculum through the use of online platforms, digital technology and apps. Experience from the past few months have shown us that clinical knowledge can definitely be delivered effectively online, as good as, if not better, to face-to-face sessions. The pandemic has definitely taught us that there is more than one way to deliver knowledge. We have indeed developed strength in the midst of adversity. The subtle difference between medical education and the other disciplines is the expectations placed upon medical doctors by qualifying agencies in terms ethical and professional behaviour standards.

Though medical ethics and communication skills are part and parcel of the curriculum in most medical schools, it is still best demonstrated in a clinical environment. How do we teach professional behaviour? Current literature suggests many teaching strategies and assessment tools that can help in achieving this goal. Role-modelling in a clinical environment has an extremely important part to play in this process, to stimulate reflection on the pertinent aspects of professionalism. The current COVID-19 pandemic shows little signs of settling at this moment in time, and is here to stay. As we currently balance the safety with well-being of students and efficient medical training, the school acknowledges that the ‘hidden curriculum’ of the medical curriculum lies in the clinical environment, at the bedside and not in the classroom. The dilemma continues. Wishing everyone an interesting and ever changing journey through the pandemic.

# ACHIEVEMENTS & EVENTS

## 2019 BEST PUBLICATION AWARD VIRTUAL CEREMONY



On 20 July, a virtual award ceremony for the 2019 Best Graduate Research (GR) Student's Publication Award was organized by the School Research Office. It was in conjunction with their first GR Induction. The awards had 4 categories centered on the disciplines in the school: Biomedical Science, Clinical Science, Global Public Health, and Psychology. However, there was no award for the Clinical Science category this time around. The applications were reviewed based on significance, originality, clarity, quality and presentation.

### Category : Biomedical Science

Awardee : **Brandon Choo Kar Meng**

Article : *Effect of newer anti-epileptic drugs (AEDs) on the cognitive status in pentylenetetrazol induced seizures in a zebrafish model*

Supervisors: Dr Mohd Farooq Shaikh, Dr Nafees Ahemad, Prof Iekhsan Othman, AP Dr Faridah Abas, Dr Uday Kundap

### Category : Global Public Health

Awardee : **Dr Ajaree Rayanakorn**

Article : *Clinical Manifestations and Risk Factors of Streptococcus suis Mortality Among Northern Thai Population: Retrospective 13-Year Cohort Study*

Supervisors: AP Dr Lee Learn Han, Dr Goh Bey Hing, AP Dr Shaun Lee Wen Huey, Peninnah Oberdorfer

### Category : Psychology

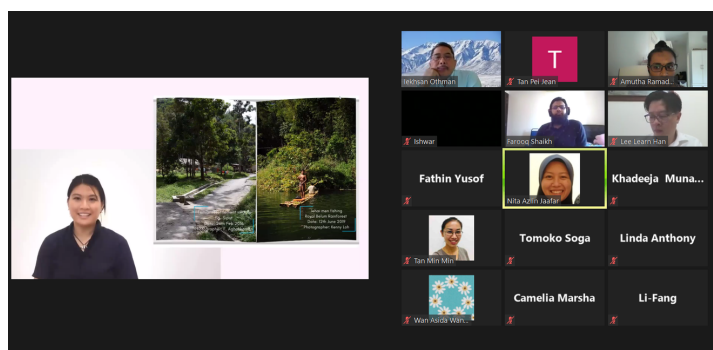
Awardee : **Dr Yogarabindranath Swarna Nantha**

Article : *The internal realities of individuals with type 2 diabetes – a functional framework of self management practices via Grounded Theory Approach*

Supervisor: AP Dr Shamsul Haque, Prof Anuar Zaini

## JCSMHS VIRTUAL 3MT COMPETITION

The Three Minute Thesis (3MT) is an annual academic research communication competition that challenges Graduate Research students to present their research in just 3 minutes and with only one slide, only this year on 16 June, it was held online. At the school level, the judging was done via Zoom and attended by 14 students and staff altogether. Below are the top 3 winners and a snippet of their abstracts:



### Yeo Li-Fang (1st Prize Winner)

**Title: The Jungle Book: Microbiomes, Health, Orang Asli**

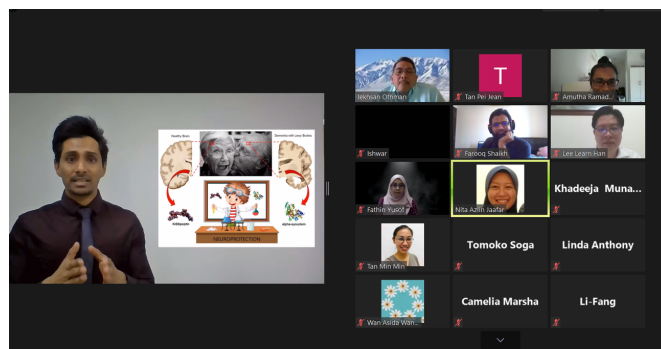
**Abstract:** Humans walked out of the plains of Africa and settled in our rainforests, becoming the ancestors of the first people of Peninsular Malaysia, the Orang Asli. The interaction between bacteria communities and human host have strong impact on human health

and resistance to diseases. I investigated the abundance of significance of bacteria that colonised Orang Asli mouth and guts, termed oral and gut microbiomes using next generation sequencing.

### Christopher Simon (2nd Prize Winner)

**Title: A KiSS to Remember**

**Abstract:** Dementia with Lewy bodies (DLB) reflects the pathognomonic manifestation of alpha-synuclein ( $\alpha$ -syn)-laden lewy bodies within selectively vulnerable neurons, instigating catastrophic damage to the brain's neuropsychological networks. The hypothalamic neuropeptide kisspeptin (KP) has been thought to have the potential for therapeutic intervention in neurodegenerative pathogenesis. By mimicking some aspects of the disease in neuronal human cells, we hypothesize that KP would enhance neuronal resistance against  $\alpha$ -syn induced neurotoxicity.



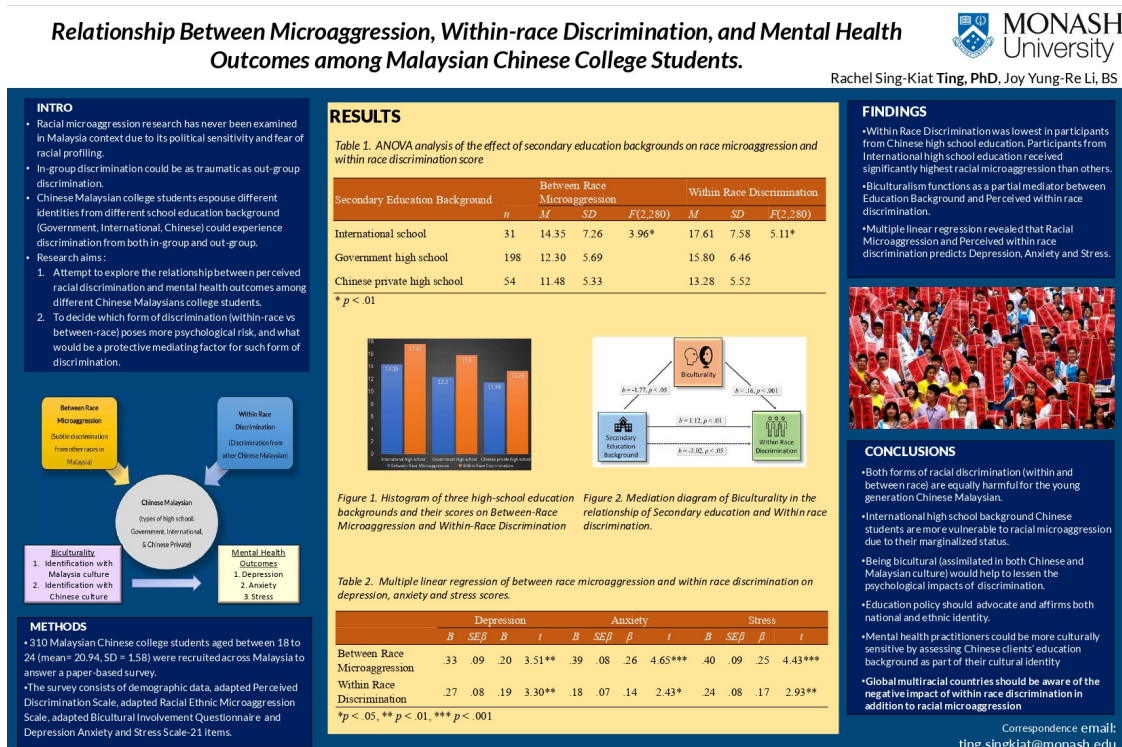
### Fathin Athirah Yusof (3rd Prize Winner)

**Title: Brain Cancer: The non-welcome visitor**

**Abstract:** "A non-welcome visitor" was used as a metaphor to describe brain cancer. In Malaysia, brain cancer occurrence demonstrates an increasing trend from year to year among adults and the second most common cancer among children. Current research focuses on identification and understanding the molecular mechanisms of neurotoxins isolated from Malaysian Krait (Bungarus Sp.) venoms that had potentially contributed to anti-cancer activities on brain cancer cells.



# APA'S DIVISION OF INTERNATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY POSTER CONTEST



Dr Rachel Ting, along with her Honors student, Joy Lim have won first place in a poster contest organized by the American Psychology Association during their virtual conference. Every year APA's Division of International Psychology (#52) hosts a poster contest at the APA convention. The purpose of the contest is about engagement in and celebration of international psychology. Volunteer judges (16) visited the D52 poster gallery and rated 53 eligible posters across 30 subject areas, evaluating each poster on a 5 point scale. Each poster received at least two reviews. Scores of 4.5 and higher received a first placing.

## PSYCHOLOGY'S UNDERGRAD & MOPC VIRTUAL ORIENTATION

On 28 July, a virtual orientation was held for Psychology undergraduates. It was one and a half hours long and student participation was good during the session as they took initiative to ask questions. The next day, it was a longer session for the Master of Professional Counselling (MoPC) virtual orientation because there were more topics to cover as well as two team-building sessions which were actively participated by the new students. All the MOPC lecturers tuned in for self-introduction as well as 2 students helpers who helped in facilitating the group activities. Mentoring system, especially for non-Psych major background, was introduced to the students as well to help with their transition to a whole new chapter of life.







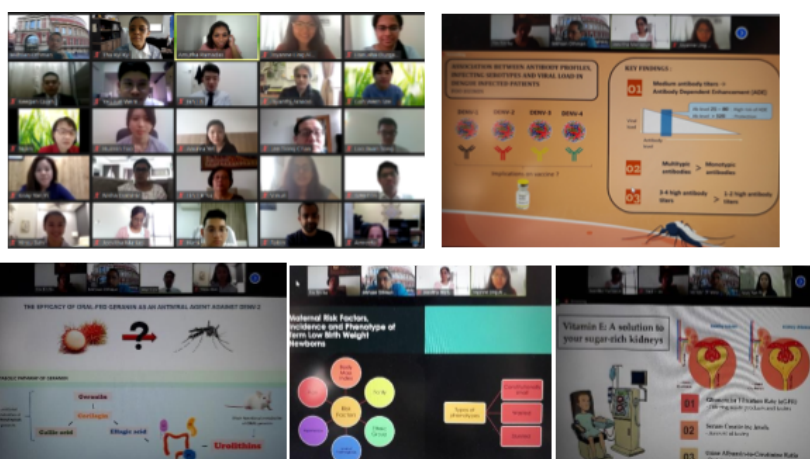
## JCSMHS YEAR 5 STUDENT PUBLISHES IN Q1 (TOP 10%) JOURNAL

Jeffrey Cheah School of Medicine and Health Sciences (JCSMHS) year 5 medical student, Chew Siang Siang, has successfully published her Scholarly Intensive Placement (SIP) project in a Q1, Top 10% journal *Cancers* with impact factor of 6.126 as the first author. The article entitled "Targeting Gut Microbial Biofilms—A Key to Hinder Colon Carcinogenesis?" (<https://www.mdpi.com/2072-6694/12/8/2272#>). The article provides vital insights on various strategies that target microbial pathogenic biofilms and could potentially play a role in the

prevention of colorectal cancer, which includes the use of natural products, silver nanoparticles, upconverting nanoparticles, thiosalicylate complexes, anti-rheumatic agent (Auranofin), probiotics and quorum-sensing inhibitors. Chew explained that not only she has gained more in-depth knowledge from the specific area of her writing, SIP project has also enabled her to be more appreciative towards the value and importance of research as a whole. For the full coverage, [click here](#).

## 3MT - CSJB RESEARCH WEEK SYMPOSIUM

It was an eventful day for the BMedSc (Hons) cohort at the CSJB Research Symposium, held on 29 August. Six BMedSc (Hons) students participated in the 3MT competition by presenting their research projects in just 3 minutes. A brief introduction of the BMedSc (Hons) program was also presented at the symposium by Dr Kyi Kyi Tha, an academic coordinator.



Below are snippets of their abstracts:

Foo Huimin (Joint Winner)

Title: Association between antibody profile, infecting serotypes and viral load in dengue-infected patients

Abstract: Dengue continues to become a global public health concern in many countries, including Malaysia. Despite extensive research, a safe and effective vaccine against dengue virus (DENV) has not been introduced. Antibody dependent enhancement (ADE) is a major problem in which a subneutralizing antibody titer can lead to enhanced clinical severity in patients secondarily infected with DENV. In the current study, we intend to investigate the dynamic interplay between the DENV-infecting serotype, antibody titer and viral load among patients in an endemic setting.

Koay Yan Yi (Joint Winner)

Title: A Randomized Controlled Trial Investigating the Reno-protective Effects of Tocotrienol-Rich Vitamin E on Diabetic Kidney Disease: Phase IIb

Abstract: Type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM) is a major pandemic of the twenty-first century. Diabetes mellitus is defined as chronic disease of impaired carbohydrate metabolism secondary to insulin insensitivity. Diabetic kidney disease (DKD) is a debilitating complication of diabetes, which develops in 40% of the diabetic population. DKD is responsible for up to 50% of ESRD in the Western populations and remains under-recognized. Tocotrienol a superior isomer of vitamin E that has emerged as a potent antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and anti-fibrotic agent in animal studies.

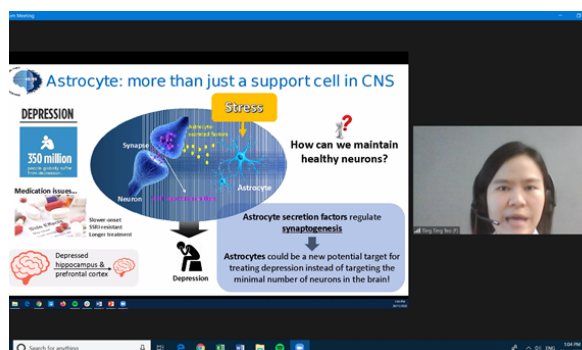
Joyanne Ling Ai Zhen (2nd Place)

Title: Single Centre Study on Maternal Risk Factors, Incidence and Phenotype of Term Low Birth Weight Newborns

Abstract: Discussions on the maternal risk factors leading to LBW infants, particularly those who have achieved term gestation, have been hampered in view of a sore lack of empirical evidence both internationally and in Malaysia. There is also no existing local data on the phenotypes of term LBW infants.

## PHD STUDENT WINS PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD

JCSMHS's PhD student, Teo Ting Ting won the People's Choice award during the 'Neuroscience in a Flash' Competition 2020, hosted by Monash Australia. Like the 3 Minute Thesis, this competition was a challenge for graduate research students to creatively present their research thesis to a general audience, in three minutes, using only one slide.



## PUSPANITA AWARDS DR RACHEL TING CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION



The Association of Wives of Civil Servants and Women Civil Servants (PUSPANITA) recognised and awarded Dr Ting Sing Kiat a Certificate of Appreciation for her Safe Space initiative. The Safe Space program was launched in March 2020 to build community resilience for hospital-bound individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic. To date, more than 100 individuals have sought assistance through this program.

## LKM BRIEFING FOR THE MOPC STUDENTS



On 23 September, we were pleased to host the President of the Malaysian Board of Counsellors (Lembaga Kaunselor Malaysia), Associate Professor Dr Wan Marzuki to speak about the process of applying for an LKM Counselling License. Prof Wan shared about requirements for application, expected timelines, as well as the differences for foreign applicants. The seminar was attended by Monash Malaysia's Masters of Professional Counselling Students as well as HELP University's Masters of Counseling students. The organization of the seminar is part of an on-going collaborative effort with HELP University's Counselling program to contribute to the counselling industry in Malaysia.



## PROFESSOR DATO' DR KHALID KADIR WINS NUTRACHAMPION AWARD

Professor Dato' Dr Khalid Bin Abdul Kadir from the Jeffrey Cheah School of Medicine and Health Sciences was today awarded the NutraChampion Award at the NutraIngredients-Asia Awards 2020 for his contribution to research and clinical studies, particularly in the area of diabetes, palm oil and tocotrienol.



The 2020 NutraIngredients-Asia Awards winners were revealed during a live broadcast. The awards, now in their third year, continue to reward true innovation, long-term market success and cutting-edge research in dietary supplements, functional foods and beverages, and nutrition. It is an industry-wide celebration of success.



## COVID-19: TO HELP THE DEAF, MALAYSIAN ACADEMICS TRANSLATE SCREENING QUESTIONS INTO SIGN LANGUAGE

Despite a sizable number of deaf people, healthcare professionals are mostly unprepared to understand or serve the needs of these patients due to their lack of training in sign language. This inspired a team of

researchers from JCSMHS' HEARD (HEALTHcare needs of the Deaf) program to collaborate with the Malaysian Federation of the Deaf (MFD) and MyBIM to develop the Malaysian Sign Language (BIM) video translations of the COVID-19 Screening Questions. The team from Monash Malaysia included Associate Professor Uma Devi Palanisamy, Associate Professor Amreeta Dhanoa, research assistants Jennifer Ng Paik Yeng and Elizabeth Chong Yie-Chuen, who is also a registered pharmacist.

The link to the tool can be accessed [here](#).

## LONG SERVICE AWARD PRESENTATION CEREMONY 2020

Congratulations to all the recipients of the Long Service Award:

Professor Dato' Anuar Zaini Bin Md Zain

Dr Sumitra A/P T Pathmanathan

Professor Mohamed Shajahan Bin  
Mohamed Yasin

Dr Lau Choon Ping

Associate Professor Tam Cai Lian

Ms Faridah Binti A Bakar

Associate Professor Nisha Angela Dominic

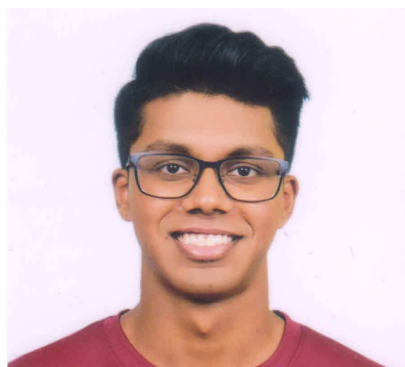
Ms Kala A/P Ramu

Associate Professor Yoga Raj

Mr Vigneswaran A/L Tambirajah

Dr Yap Han Seong

Ms Ungku Zulaikha Binti Ungku Omar



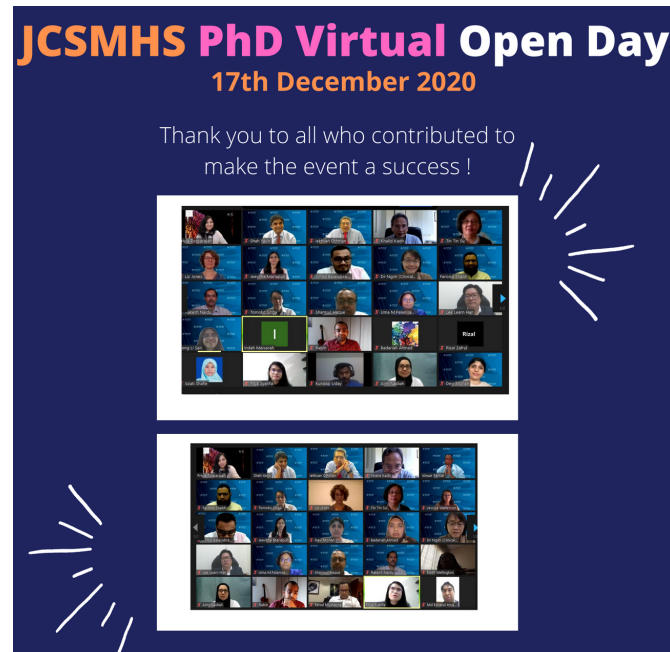
### FIRST YEAR STUDENT AWARDED HONG LEONG FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

Brandon Fernandez, a JCSMHS first-year student, has successfully received a scholarship from Hong Leong Foundation that has agreed to sponsor him RM 32,000 per annum throughout the 5 years of his studies. During his scholarship interview, he commended his Young Scholar Program (YSP) experiences for playing a big role in his

attainment of the scholarship. He also thoroughly impressed the interviewers when his involvement in writing a medical research paper at an early stage was mentioned, which to him, was the key highlight of his YSP journey. He continued to say, "I personally feel that engaging in a work environment related to my degree also showed the interviewers that I am strongly passionate about my ambitions which gave them the confidence to sponsor me."

Brandon also specially mentioned Dr Vinod Balasubaramaniam, who wrote a letter of recommendation for him after YSP was over, to which he states no doubt played a big role in helping him attain the scholarship. In his words, "Achieving this award has been a great and challenging experience for me throughout the past few years and I am truly grateful to everyone that has supported me in attaining this success. I have been able to engage more competently in my academics this year feeling reassured that this scholarship provides my family and I with good financial support."

## PHD VIRTUAL OPEN DAY






Dec 17th 2020 witnessed the successful running of Jeffrey Cheah School of Medicine and Health Sciences (JCSMHS) first-ever PhD virtual open day. This was probably the best platform to showcase the School, its research and researchers, the infrastructure, and the Campus in the current pandemic while the world works towards controlling the Covid-19. The Virtual Open Day provided the School with a window to showcase itself to the world and to welcome new students. Ten research strengths were showcased in this PhD Virtual Open Day, namely Public Health, Neuroscience, Neuropharmacology, Clinical Research, Microbiome, Infectious Diseases, Diabetes and Obesity, Cancer Research, Psychology, and Digital Health.

The successful running of the PhD Virtual Open Day is a good example of a great team effort across disciplines and cross-functional collaboration across the very diverse layers of our academic and professional staff, alumni and current students to showcase the goodness of JCSMHS. The PhD Virtual Open Day registered interests from local and international participants. The international participants were from the middle eastern countries, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, France, Australia and the UK. Going forward, the School will look into running shorter virtual events that showcase its other research strengths.



## TIPS FOR YOUR SAFE RETURN TO WORK

 <b>BEFORE LEAVING HOME</b>	 <b>AT WORK</b>	 <b>RETURNING HOME</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Do a self-check to make sure you do not have a <b>fever or cough</b>.</li><li>✓ <b>Pack a home-cooked meal</b> as your lunch or pre-order your lunch delivery to avoid the lunch crowds.</li><li>✓ Prepare your <b>mask, sanitiser, wet tissues, own water bottle &amp; cutlery</b>.</li><li>✓ Preferably commute with your <b>own vehicle</b> instead of public transport.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ <b>Wash or sanitise your hands</b> before entering the building &amp; subject yourself to a <b>temperature check</b>.</li><li>✓ <b>Avoid physical contact</b>, greet with a wave, a nod or a simple "hello!".</li><li>✓ Maintain a minimum <b>1-meter distance</b> with others at all times, e.g: discussion, washrooms, pantry etc.</li><li>✓ <b>Avoid sharing</b> utensils e.g. phone, pen, computer, mouse, keyboard etc. Otherwise, wipe down the surfaces with a disinfectant before and after using it.</li><li>✓ <b>Use the stairs</b> instead of the lift whenever possible.</li><li>✓ <b>Avoid touching</b> hand railings, door handles &amp; lift buttons. <b>Use your elbow</b> or wear gloves.</li><li>✓ Adhere to your company's S.O.P. if you are developing a <b>fever or cough</b>.</li><li>✓ Wash your hands and wipe down your workstation before leaving for home.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ <b>Do not expose yourself to your family</b> before cleaning or sanitising yourself.</li><li>✓ <b>Disinfect all your accessories</b> e.g. bag, wallet, handphone etc. <b>Wash your clothes</b> immediately.</li><li>✓ <b>Take a shower</b>, clean yourself from head to toe.</li><li>✓ Eat balanced meals, workout &amp; sleep well to <b>boost your immunity</b>.</li></ul>

Source: Allianz

## UPCOMING EVENTS & NEWS

If you would like to share any news (past and/or upcoming events, achievement, student events, grants, etc.) with the School via newsletter, please email to [gurmeet.kaur@monash.edu](mailto:gurmeet.kaur@monash.edu).