Fun in pharmacy

For Mrs Chan Ching Oi, the first head of SGH’s Pharmacy Department, the constant changes in her working life offered fun and the chance to learn new things.

When the Ministry of Health (MOH) closed its pharmaceutical manufacturing arm in the 1980s, Mrs Chan Ching Oi, who had begun her 28-year career with the ministry as head of the unit, felt the change keenly.

Located on the SGH Campus off Jalan Bukit Merah, the unit made generic drugs such as painkillers and antibiotics for government outpatient clinics and hospitals.

When the facilities became outdated, overseas consultants were engaged to look into a revamp. After they put the cost at $30 million, the ministry decided it would be better to close the unit and buy all the drugs it needed instead.

“It was a heartache. I loved all those machines and equipment. We had tablet machines, mixture machines, injection machines... all kinds of machines,” Mrs Chan said wistfully about the unit’s closure.

By then, she had already transferred to Singapore General Hospital (SGH) as Head of the hospital’s Pharmacy Department – a post she held until she retired in 1993, aged 55.

After a decade with MOH’s manufacturing unit, where challenges included replacing a diesel-fired boiler with one that ran on more environmentally-friendly gas, Mrs Chan spent the next 10 years as the head of its pharmaceutical services’ purchasing unit. She was given an annual budget of as much as $36 million to procure drugs for the ministry, as well as raw materials for its manufacturing arm.

SGH was her third and final MOH post – a job she held after a decade with MOH’s manufacturing arm in the 1980s, and a period as the SGH's Pharmacy Department – a post she held until she retired in 1993, aged 55.

By Suki Lor

Introducing Immuno CPX, which is developed in collaboration with Taiwan medical universities and Japan Genetic Research Institute to help alleviate post-chemotherapy symptoms. It contains a precious mix of traditional herbs such as PSP of Coriolus versicolor, curcumin, Phellinus linteus and Antrodia camphorata to modulate and support immunity.

Cardio CPS is formulated for those who want heart health. Using panax ginseng, Hawthorn extract, coenzyme Q10 and selenium, it has antioxidant benefits to protect cells, promote blood circulation and support heart function.

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