

# Hospice care is not only for the elderly

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I thank Mr Seah Yam Meng for his letter on the important subject of end-of-life care (Raise awareness of alternatives in end-of-life care; June 1).

The word "hospice", unfortunately, evokes the idea of a depressing abode.

Many people in our community, including many of our older medical doctors and nurses, sadly still have memories of our Sago Lane "death houses" of the past.

Having visited and trained in hospices in the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Hong Kong and New Zealand, I was determined, along with my fellow co-founder, Dr Seet Ai Mee, and our pioneer council members, to open a standalone, secular hospice in Singapore to provide our people with first-class palliative care.

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That took place in 1992, and this year marks the 25th anniversary of Dover Park Hospice.

Mr Seah noted that he was surprised to see that Dover Park Hospice offered "a very comfortable and serene environment" where his mother could spend her last days "with dignity, minimal suffering and a fairly good quality of life".

Although it is true that end-of-life issues are naturally more common among the elderly, the hospice has also seen many young and middle-aged patients requiring our care.

There are other excellent establishments looking after babies and young children who are in need of palliative care.

These organisations include KK Women's and Children's Hospital, Assisi Hospice, National University Hospital and HCA Hospice Care.

We owe a debt of gratitude to all the dedicated doctors, nurses, ancillary staff and volunteers who have given such compassionate service to alleviate the suffering and difficulties that beset the terminally ill and their families in Singapore.

**Jerry Lim Kian Tho (Dr)**

Co-founder and past chairman

Dover Park Hospice