



Madam Sita, 70, says she is grateful to be able to see her husband, Mr. Abdul Haseem, at the Jurong Community Hospital. She is also able to see him at a special day at the hospital. PHOTO: ARIYANA ANAND

I felt very happy that someone I could trust was with me,

PRO ABDEL HASSEEM MOHAMMED YUSOFF  
 It's amazing to see my wife in the hospital. I feel like I'm not alone. She has been able to eat and speak. She has been able to go back to her usual life.

# More hospitals letting caregivers stay overnight

Allowing caregivers to participate in patient care improves outcomes and builds confidence



After her husband had a stroke on Sept 22, Madam Naniya, 66, slept next to his hospital bed for about seven weeks until he was discharged on Nov 7. She let his wife only to buy food for her and to bathe in an assigned shower cubicle near his ward.

Madam Naniya's husband has been in a geriatric chair and was a wheelchair when he was discharged from Jurong Community Hospital. Madam Naniya says in Malay, through an interpreter that she learnt to transfer her husband from one chair to another, which gave her the confidence to take him home to bathe.

She is Indonesian and she is Singaporean. Their two daughters are in Singapore in his town.

I was quite worried at first that he would have a stomachache or discomfort from my food. Now, he tells me what he wants to eat and that makes me happy.



Madam Siti Hala Khasim learnt to cook without spices to make food for her husband, Mr. Abdul Haseem, after a stroke surgery. PHOTO: NG SION LIAN

EXTENDED OVERNIGHT STAYS  
 The Tan Tock Seng Hospital and Mount Elizabeth Hospital have allowed a designated caregiver to be present with hospitalised patients who have complex care needs, including staying overnight at the hospital.

However, the traditional approach in many other hospitals was to limit visitor presence in hospital wards. There were concerns that visitors might hinder patient care and affect patients' rest. More hospitals encourage caregivers to stay overnight and their involvement, having seen the negative impact of visitor overstay during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Their presence can reassure patients who have dementia or are children. They can provide emotional support and motivate patients to work on rehabilitation exercises. The hospital does not keep track of the number of caregivers who have spent for overnight stays. Naniya says that for patients with long-term care needs, it is important to engage caregivers early so they can learn how to support activities of daily living, such as bathing, ironing and feeding. Caregivers should also learn to spot symptoms that may require medical intervention. Beyond overnight stays, some hospitals have also increased visiting hours in 2025. Alexandra Hospital now receives visitors from 10am to 10pm, compared with 9am to 9pm previously. Tan Tock Seng Hospital's visiting hours are noon to 10pm. Before, the hospital had visitors only from noon to 5pm and 8 to 10pm. "Extended visiting hours at Alexandra Hospital were a boon to Mr T.J.'s family," says Naniya. "It allowed him to visit his late mother even after shift work."

## How hospitals, other institutions are helping caregivers

FROM C1

FROM HOSPITAL TO HOME

His father, Mr HJ Tengku Badarsh Tengku Ismail, had dementia and was warded in hospital for nine days before dying in early November at age 90.

Madam Siti had observed how her husband's stomach bag was emptied and his wound cleaned in the hospital. The hospital arranged a home nursing team to help with the care team also walked her through other needs. Mr. Abdul Malik required a commode so he would not have to walk to the bathroom. With his lower energy levels and increased weakness, he also needed a wheelchair which meant their home had to be cleared of extra furniture so he could move around.



Madam Fortuna Tan was a caregiver to her late mother-in-law who had dementia. She now helps other caregivers. PHOTO: ARIYANA ANAND



Ms S. Susheela Devi cares for her mother Lakshmi Raman, who has dementia but still enjoys doing patchwork. PHOTO: LIM LILIAN

As Singapore ages, the need for caregiving is rising and caregiver burnout is a real concern. Caregivers can turn to medical social workers at hospitals and the Agency for Integrated Care, which coordinates care services in Singapore. Then there are other groups, such as social enterprise SG Assist. It links caregivers to community resources and offers them emotional support, training and pathways to "micro jobs" or task-based temporary work.

Her father died some years ago, but her mother, Madam Lakshmi Raman, 80, has dementia and lives

do. How could I cope with my husband falling all the time? "Now, I have embraced the fact that this is part of my life. I'll do my best for my husband, who is a good person, very caring, very patient. Even when he is hospitalised, he tries to cheer me up."

It's moulded me to be a better caregiver and to be more patient.

MS S. SUSHEELA DEVI on taking care of her mother and practicing arts and crafts for self-care

Ms S. Susheela Devi, 62, says she has learned to be a better caregiver and more patient. She has learned to be a better caregiver and more patient. She has learned to be a better caregiver and more patient.

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