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ECG's dragon boat team was rejected from participating in the recent DBS Marine Regatta (Adaptive Community) as the organiser felt that epilepsy is not a disability. The following is the letter our executive director wrote to the press.

Recently, the issue of seeing epilepsy as an invisible disability surfaced when the Epilepsy Care Group (Singapore) registered for a sporting event. Just because symptoms are not physically visible when we look at a person struggling with epilepsy does not mean he is not struggling internally.

While there is no universal agreement on whether epilepsy is a disability, most of the European Union countries view it as a disability.

The United States has its Americans With Disabilities Act and the expectation is that most First World countries would also see epilepsy as a disability - an invisible disability, just like diabetes and some mental illnesses.

Living with an invisible illness often leads to judgment because others believe these people look fine on the outside, and therefore must be "faking" their suffering. Unlike having a condition that is observable, people who live with invisible illnesses often face a lack of social awareness and additional stigma.

As a result, these individuals often face more scepticism, and are accused of being lazy, or moody, or face other dismissive judgments.

Here is a painful paradox: Life can be perfectly normal for weeks or months. But then, through a quirk of the brain, a person with epilepsy can wake up on the footpath with a cut tongue, dislocated shoulders, soiled clothes and a crowd of onlookers who may not always be sympathetic. An invisible disability has become visible again.

The suffering caused by epilepsy is both physical and psycho-social, bringing about enormous consequences in every area of living and functioning to persons with epilepsy, their families and society at large. Attitudes towards people with epilepsy are influenced by the extent of knowledge about the condition. Acceptance of people with epilepsy is so crucial to give them the social and psychological space they need. This can only come from awareness of what epilepsy is.

It is the hope of the Epilepsy Care Group (Singapore) that society will come to know the problems that people with epilepsy face, and work towards improvements.

A version of this article appeared in Forum Online, the Internet edition of The Straits Times on May 17, 2019, with the headline 'Trying to understand epilepsy'.



ECG News and Upcoming Events



Bicentennial

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



If you are an ECG member, join us for this year's 24th Annual General Meeting to address your concerns and share suggestions and ideas for our future work.

We are honoured to have with us at this meeting Dr Ding Ding, an associate professor and neuro-epidermiologist at the Institute of Neurology, Fudan University Huashan Hospital. She is also the Chair of the Western Pacific Regional Committee of the International Bureau for Epilepsy. She will share with us on the epilepsy situation in China.

When : Saturday, 3 August 2019

Time: 2-5 pm

(The first 20 members who register and attend this event throughout will receive a \$10 FairPrice voucher & a door-gift).

EnABLE Support Group Meeting

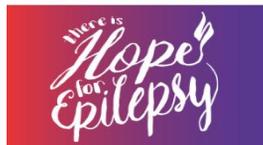
When : Friday, 26 July 2019

#HopeForEpilepsy

Time: 7pm

Topic: Psychological & Social Impact of Epilepsy

Speaker: Goh Keng Hwee



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13th Asian & Oceanian Epilepsy Congress

ECG is delighted to announce that the 13th Asian & Oceanian Epilepsy Congress (AOEC) will be held in Fukuoka, Japan from 8-11 October 2020. With a new format for the scientific programme that focuses on education and networking, and an enthralling city hosting the congress that is easily accessible from throughout the region and beyond, this promises to be the best AOEC yet. Will we see you there?



Life Begins...When You Dare!

Exercise isn't about doing it all - it's about doing ENOUGH! Sweat it out with fellow members and make new friends in ECG dragon boat team. Don't be a couch potato!

Training dates : 28 July 2019 & 31 Aug 2019

Time : 4pm

Where : Water Sports Centre (Sports Hub)



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