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Title : TTSH doctors receive critical lab test results via SMS
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SINGAPORE: Surgeons at Tan Tock Seng Hospital can now receive critical laboratory test results via SMS on their mobile phones.

The National Healthcare Group said this is the first of such system in the world.

Some 12,000 laboratory tests are carried out on patients at Tan Tock Seng Hospital every day.

And for about 60 of these patients, it is important that doctors receive the test results as soon as possible.

Until recently, laboratory technicians used to call ward nurses to inform them of abnormal results in urgent cases.

Dr Heng Chin Tiong, Consultant, General Surgery Department, Tan Tock Seng Hospital, said: "The nurse would page the doctor who would then call the ward to find out the details of the results so she would have to sit by the phone to wait for the doctor to answer the page."

To facilitate a quicker process, the hospital's automated laboratory system has been enhanced to allow doctors to get the results faster.

It started with a pilot project involving 80 doctors from the hospital's General Surgery Department and it is now being rolled out to other departments.

A similar pilot project will also be carried out at the National University Hospital which conducts 10,000 lab tests a day.

The computer system picks up any abnormal results on critical tests and sends an SMS to one of the doctors in charge of the case.

And the doctor gets the result in two minutes rather than 18 minutes under the old manual system.

Dr Heng said: "If the doctor is informed of the result earlier, he is able to act on the patient before a crisis develops and it would be easier to manage this patient before he collapses."

Nearly everyone owns a mobile phone these days and sending SMS is easy and relatively cheap.

As every minute counts when doctors deal with life-threatening cases, patients will ultimately benefit from this new system.

- CNA/so