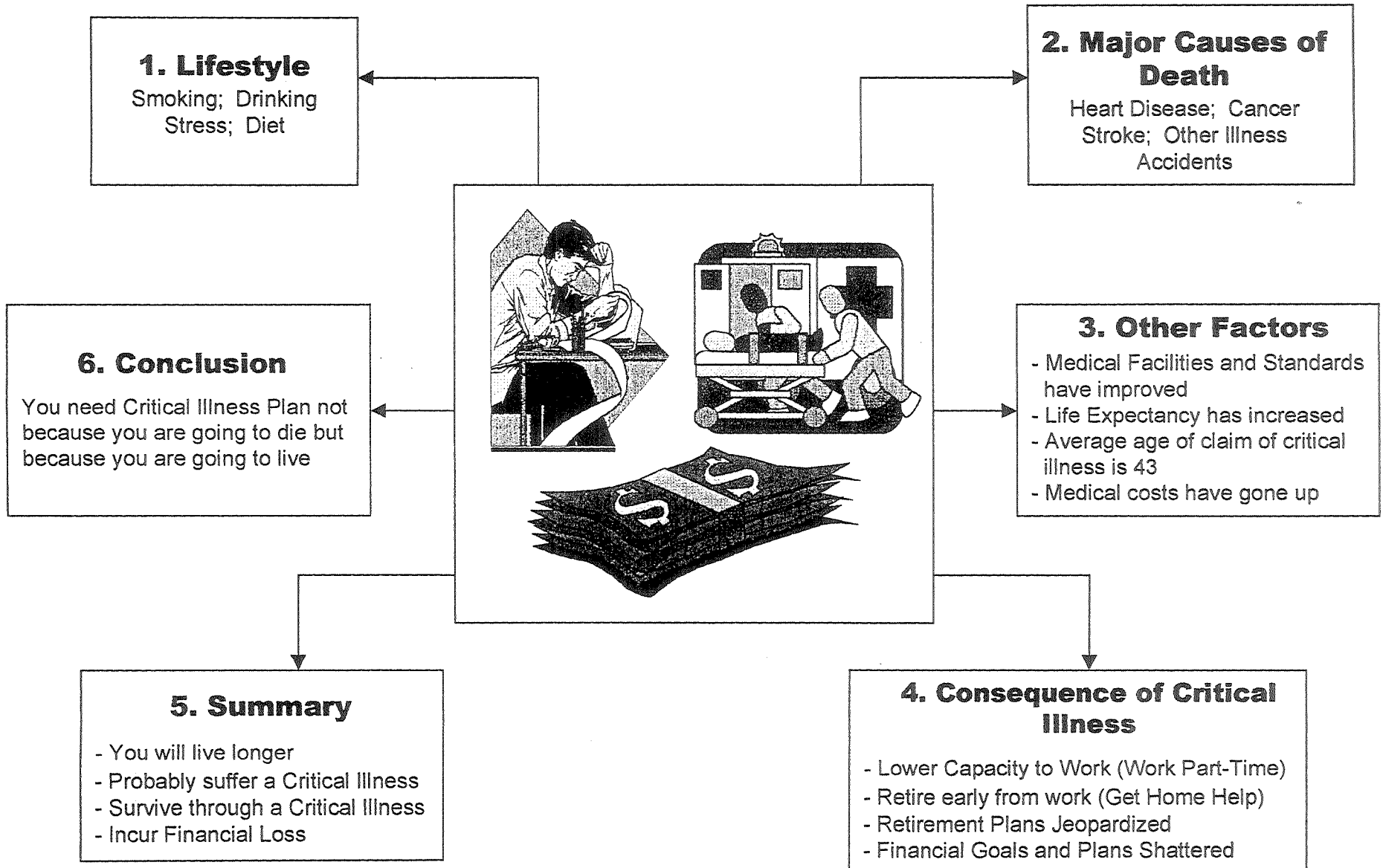


Critical Illness Plan



HOME

Three leukaemia sufferers — and their stories

David: Faith and encouragement from friends keep him going

THE first thought that came to 39-year-old pilot David Goh when he was told he had leukaemia was: "Why me?" He was very shocked as he had always considered himself to be very fit but, with the help of family and friends, he was determined to overcome the disease.

The symptoms of the disease were a fever that did not go away even after medication. He became more breathless, had enlarged lymph nodes and bruised more easily.

It changed his life completely.

Mr Goh does not want to name the company he works for, but he has been on paid medical leave since the diagnosis last November. He has spent more time in hospital than at home.

He has lost three kilograms and all his hair. His face has become slightly puffy from the steroid therapy that he is undergoing.

A bone marrow transplant might be his only hope for a recovery and his doctors are now sourcing for marrow

donors in Hongkong and Taiwan.

He said from his hospital bed in Singapore General Hospital: "I must not be defeated. I will not give up without first trying all the drugs and treatment available."

"Right now, what keeps my family and me going is our faith in God and encouragement from friends and relatives."

Mr Goh's 36-year-old wife keeps house and the couple have two children, who are in Primary 1 and 5. He has not thought about how they will be provided for if he dies.

(He never thought this could happen, and did not buy any insurance.)

He said confidently: "Next year, I'll be back to flying!"

He added with a laugh: "Friends who have come in contact with me suddenly realised that this could happen to anybody."

"All of them have loaded on their insurance, and I am glad for them."



David Goh: "I must not be defeated."

Miss Tan: Believes that a match will be found here

MISS L. Tan (not her real name) is keeping her leukaemia from her grandmother, who is in her 80s, because she does not want her to worry.

Miss Tan, a 29-year-old accountant, was working in Britain when she found out last May about her illness.

Her younger brother, 27, who is studying in Britain, had a tissue-typing done immediately. But his marrow did not match hers.

She underwent chemotherapy there, but after a relapse in January this year, she decided to return to Singapore to seek further treatment and to look for a donor.

She also wanted to be with her family.

A tearful Miss Tan said: "When I had a relapse, I considered if I should just let myself die, not because of the physical suffering, but the fi-

nancial burden on my family."

But after speaking to family members and friends, she decided that it would be very selfish of her to give up when there was still hope.

She said: "My family is not well-off and so far my medical bills have amounted to more than \$34,000.

"Part of it has come from my father's CPF account, and the rest has been paid in cash by my parents."

She does not have much savings as she was helping to put her brother through university in Britain.

Because of her condition, she has stopped working.

She said: "I believe I have a very good chance of finding a match in Singapore. Every day, I tell myself that I will be cured."



Maggie Koh: "I don't think about my illness."

Maggie: Will she be able to hold on for 4½ years?

FOURTEEN-year old Maggie Koh does not look as if she has leukaemia and is in need of a bone marrow transplant.

The bubbly River Valley High School student with bright, lively eyes has been in remission for five months, which means her blood count looks normal and blood tests show no cancer cells.

If there is no recurrence of the disease in the next 4½ years, she has a good chance of surviving.

She is on oral drugs now,

and goes to the Singapore General Hospital for regular check-ups.

She said: "I don't think about my illness and I try to do what my friends in school do, but I can't take part in sports anymore."

Maggie was diagnosed with leukaemia in February last year. She missed one year of school to undergo treatment.

She did very well in her PSLE and made it to a Special Assistance Plan school.

More than \$30,000, from her parents' savings, from relatives, and a collection taken up by her father's colleagues, have been spent so far on her treatment.

Recently, she received a \$10,000 donation from Bvlgari Singapore, a boutique for the Italian fashion house of Bvlgari.

Her mother, Madam Vivien Ng, 45, a senior accounts clerk, is concerned about the cost of the medical treatment.

She and her husband are

using their Medishield insurance scheme to help pay for the treatment.

She said: "Without Medishield, we would have had to pay more than \$100,000. It is scary that the treatment is so costly."

Maggie's best chance of recovery is to have a bone marrow transplant, but no donor has been found here yet.

Her younger sister, 12, is not compatible. The family cannot afford to go to Hongkong and Taiwan to look for

donors. Madam Ng added: "Even if we can find a donor here, we will be hard pressed to come up with the money to pay for the transplant."

"My husband, a packer, now works overtime whenever possible so that we can give her better treatment."

She almost broke down when talking about her daughter. "She was so rarely sick that the diagnosis came as a shock to us and now we worry every day what tomorrow might bring."