



BRIDGING THE GAP

Enhancing Equitable Access & Innovation in Gastric Cancer Care in Singapore

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Singapore has developed one of the most advanced healthcare systems in Asia, with robust infrastructure for cancer care, comprehensive insurance coverage, and cutting-edge diagnostic and treatment technologies. Gastric cancer outcomes are supported by strong screening initiatives for high-risk groups, universal access to endoscopy, established molecular diagnostics, and rapid adoption of innovative therapies. However, challenges remain in sustaining equitable access across socio-economic groups, enhancing survivorship care, and ensuring continued affordability of high-cost targeted and immunotherapies.

With **Level 4 maturity**, Singapore is positioned to consolidate its leadership through stronger data-driven quality assurance, more inclusive prevention programs, and holistic survivorship models.

INTRODUCTION

Building on High Capacity Amid Cost and Equity Challenges

Singapore benefits from highly developed tertiary hospitals, robust financing schemes (MediShield Life, MediSave, MediFund), and a strong regulatory framework that accelerates access to innovation. Gastric cancer is not the most prevalent cancer locally, but remains an important disease given the regional risk profile and the presence of high-risk groups.

With gastric cancer maturity rated at **Level 4**, the system demonstrates advanced capabilities. The remaining challenge is balancing sustainability, equity, and holistic care beyond acute treatment.





GASTRIC CANCER IN SINGAPORE

Current Landscape and Strategic Gaps

Pillar	Current Status	Strength	Policy Action
Early Detection & Diagnosis	No mass screening, but opportunistic endoscopy and H. pylori testing are widely accessible. Patients are typically diagnosed earlier than in many neighboring countries.	Universal healthcare access, strong primary care, and widespread endoscopy capacity.	Expand risk-stratified screening programs for high-risk groups (family history, ethnicity-based risks); strengthen population H. pylori eradication strategies; use AI-assisted endoscopy to further improve early detection.
Biomarker & Molecular Testing	HER2, PD-L1, MSI, and NGS panels are widely available in public and private hospitals; turnaround times are rapid.	Advanced laboratory infrastructure and integration of molecular data into treatment planning.	Ensure equitable funding/reimbursement of comprehensive molecular testing; embed molecular results into national cancer registry data to drive precision medicine research.
Treatment Access	Access to surgery, peri-operative chemotherapy, targeted therapies, and immunotherapies is available. However, affordability of novel therapies remains a challenge for some patients.	Rapid adoption of new treatments, supported by national drug evaluation frameworks and availability in tertiary centres.	Expand subsidy schemes and value-based pricing to reduce out-of-pocket burden for targeted/immunotherapies; strengthen decentralization of peri-operative chemotherapy to regional hospitals.
Clinical Guidelines	National and institutional guidelines are aligned with international standards and are regularly updated.	Strong specialist societies and academic centres ensure evidence-based practice.	Enhance dissemination of guidelines to private-sector clinicians; establish routine audits and feedback loops linked to quality metrics.
Palliative & Survivorship Care	Advanced palliative services exist but survivorship models are still developing, particularly for long-term nutritional, psychosocial, and quality-of-life support.	Established palliative networks, home-based care options, and robust hospice services.	Scale survivorship clinics with nutrition, psychological and rehabilitation services; strengthen integration of palliative services at earlier stages of the cancer journey.



CONCLUSION & Call to Action

Singapore has reached a high maturity stage for gastric cancer care, with advanced diagnostics, treatments, and data systems. The next step is to enhance affordability, equity, and survivorship. By focusing on preventive strategies, value-based access to innovation, and holistic survivorship services, Singapore can maintain leadership in gastric cancer care while ensuring sustainability and patient-centered outcomes.



KEY POLICY PRIORITIES

1 **Scale up risk-based screening and *H. pylori* eradication** to prevent new cases and detect GC earlier.

2 **Ensure equitable access to molecular testing and novel therapies** by expanding subsidies, risk-sharing, and value-based pricing models.

3 **Strengthen survivorship models** with long-term nutritional, psychosocial, and rehabilitation support.

4 **Enhance data-driven quality improvement** by integrating molecular, treatment, and outcomes data into national registries.

5 **Consolidate palliative care integration** by embedding supportive care early and linking hospital and community services seamlessly.

CONCLUSION

Singapore's gastric cancer system reflects global best practices in infrastructure and innovation. With targeted reforms focusing on affordability, survivorship, and preventive strategies, the country can sustain world-class outcomes and ensure equitable access for all patients, regardless of income or background