

Esports

Everybody? Electronic? Entertaining?

I felt slightly uncomfortable walking into the dark dingy place. Just beside the entrance was an altar, lit with glowing red candles. The place smelt like cigarettes. I was greeted by a man covered in tattoos who asked for my identification. My peers handed out theirs, and I followed suit. "Number XX to ZZ," the guy muttered and pointed in a direction. We walked over to the numbers assigned to us and sat down. The chairs were pretty worn out. The mouse and keyboard felt slightly tacky. There were occasionally shouts and a male voice cussing from neighbouring terminals.

You would probably be wondering where I was. Well, I was in a LAN shop, a particularly shady one that is. And why, you may ask? Well, all for the sake of playing Left 4 Dead 2 (L4D2) with my peers. It wasn't unusual. I was still in medical school then, and we would occasionally go to a LAN shop to game after our tests and exams. To be fair, not all LAN shops we went to were like that. I have been to spanking clean and super new LAN shops with nice computers and cool gaming headsets. Either way, we always had a great time pitting our gaming skills against each other.

When the *College Mirror* team was brainstorming about this issue and potential articles, I had never heard of the term "cybersports" until Luke mentioned it. Cybersports is the use of computer games in a competitive manner and can be of two types – multiplayer, whereby there are two or more teams competing, or single player, where each player plays independently. I guess I have been somewhat involved in cybersports for longer than I thought.

It started off with having a younger brother. Very many years ago, we played HALO on Xbox. We then moved on to Gears of War on PC. Then I did Battle Field, Counterstrike, and L4D2 with the guys in medical school. And on my own, Tomb Raider, Dishonoured 1 and 2, Bioshock... especially when I needed a little break studying for FM exams. A disclaimer though: as much as I enjoy gaming, I'm no expert gamer. I just enjoy the story, the graphics, the music, and especially the teamplay with friends. So when Gabriel texted me out of the blue to invite me to one of their impromptu L4D2 gaming sessions with Luke and Junjie, I agreed.

Time flew by that Friday night. I couldn't even remember whether it was one or two hours of slaying zombies, trying to avoid being covered by Boomer's bile, being pounced on by a Hunter, being dragged by a Smoker's tongue, being plowed by the Charger, getting jumped by the Jockey, avoiding acid from the Spitter, fighting the ever powerful Tank, trying not to startle the Witch, needing to be saved countless times, saving my teammates, all while trying to

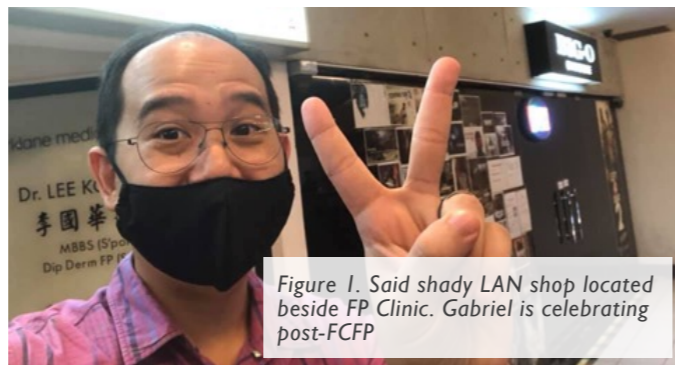


Figure 1. Said shady LAN shop located beside FP Clinic. Gabriel is celebrating post-FCFP

stay alive as a team till the next safe house. See Figure 2 for examples of our excellent teamwork.

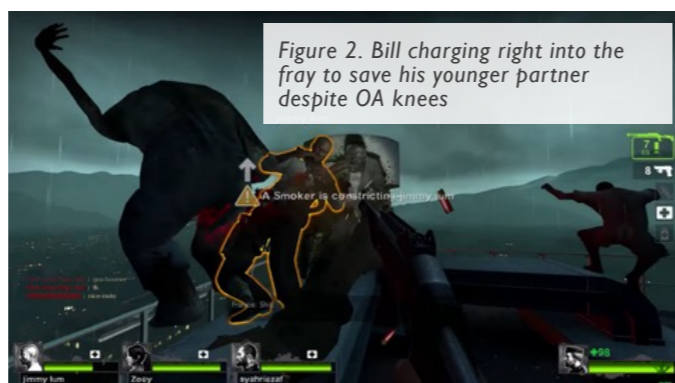


Figure 2. Bill charging right into the fray to save his younger partner despite OA knees

Gaming with friends is fun and exciting, helps build camaraderie and teamwork, develops problem-solving and strategy skills, and certainly helps with hand-eye coordination. A win all around for such an effective stress-relieving team activity. So the next time you are thinking of a team bonding activity, why not consider a cybersport? If it's playing L4D2, don't forget to hit us up. ;)

Game on.

by Dr Yuen Sok Wei Julia

Gaming with friends is fun and exciting, helps build camaraderie and teamwork, develops problem-solving and strategy skills, and certainly helps with hand-eye coordination. A win all around for such an effective stress-relieving team activity.

'll start from the middle, the part where Julia said Gabriel texted her to play L4D2.

Not long before, our L4D2 team had only three human survivors - Junjie, Gabriel, and I. We were always one human survivor short and had to rely on the AI as the fourth one. Needless to say, we were always one player short of fun. So when Gabriel told me a shocking revelation – that he had found the fourth human survivor, and a lady, no less! – I could not believe my ears! "Wow, now we really have a real Zoey on our team!" Even more surprising, Gabriel told me it was someone we know – Julia! Julia, of all the ladies? Hmm, that can't be. She looks so gentle, kind, mature, and quiet... the list of good qualities could go on, but I'm running out of editorial space. In short, how could she be a cyber-gamer? For a female cyber-gamer, I would expect someone who is stereotypically rough, tough, rugged, a smoker, drinker, profanity-spewing Ah Lian with a killer look in her eyes. That's why many LAN shops have a cigarette smoke smell in the air. I couldn't imagine Julia having any of these qualities! Then I thought back to myself, and I realised I was intelligent, handsome, gentle, soft-spoken, kind, learned, didn't smoke, and didn't drink, but yet I'm a cyber-gamer! I guess we can never judge a cyber-gamer by their looks – see Figure 3!

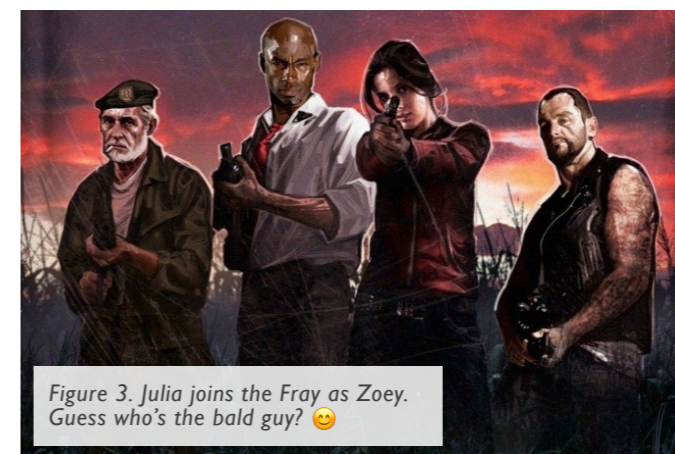


Figure 3. Julia joins the Fray as Zoey. Guess who's the bald guy? 😊

HALO was a game I played when I was a medical officer, but I had started playing console games when I was nine years old, so you can imagine my journey with console and computer games started way before. Even before consoles were as intelligent as the Xbox and the PlayStation, there was the ancient 8-bit Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) with their cartridges that sometimes didn't work when their copper connectors got oxidised. I remember having to blow my hot breath at the connectors and then give them a good wipe before inserting them into the consoles. The graphics were terrible by present-day standards, but back then, they gave me so many hours of pure joy, especially during school holidays when I was in primary school. Among my favourite games were Pac-Man, Tetris, Mario Brothers, Contra, Excitebike, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Double Dragon, Bomberman, Ice Climber, Road Racer, Galaga, Kung Fu, Circus Circus, RoboCop, etc. And because these games were short in duration and small

in size, some cartridges had multiple games in one, e.g., 64 games in one, and I often bought those as they were more bang for my buck. Of course, my parents were not rich enough to buy that many games for me, so we had a buddy system whereby we would exchange cartridges after we had played them, with friends who had different games, so that we need not pay more to buy more cartridges. Later on, I realised that my neighbour had the Sega Mega Drive, with different games like Sonic the Hedgehog and Streets of Rage. Needless to say that neighbour quickly became my friend! So, I had always thought that games were meant to be played with a joystick or joystick.

When I was in lower secondary, the IBM XT was being phased out, and the IBM 386 was becoming more commonplace. My dad got our family a second-hand 386 PC, and I was introduced to the world of PCs, with their VGA monitors and 5¼-inch soft floppy disks. Later, the 3½-inch hard diskettes became more common. Microsoft DOS was the predominant operating system then, and when Microsoft Windows came out, the world suddenly became so colourful and full of windows, without the need to remember all the unintuitive MS DOS commands. At that time, I had thought that most games should be played with a joystick, so how could a keyboard and mouse combo be suitable for playing games? But I did manage to learn to play on the PC! What games did I play on them? Doom, Diablo, Castle Wolfenstein, Prince of Persia, Sim City, Civilizations, Command and Conquer, Duke Nukem, Wing Commander, Quake, Resident Evil, etc. Some of the games with longer storylines and better graphics often required multiple disks for installation, so when CD-ROMs came into the picture, we suddenly could have very high-quality games in a single CD instead of an entire box of diskettes! Even when I went on to JC and during my NS days, desktop PCs were still very expensive, often costing several thousands of dollars and way out of my savings and budget, so I often DIY-ed and built my own PC, buying selected components and parts from Sim Lim Square or Funan, which were my favourite hangout places (other than the MPH and the National Library at Stamford Road, where I often went to browse or borrow my favourite Star Wars books, but this iconic library has since been demolished in 2004. Thankfully, it reopened at its current premises at Victoria Street in 2005). I spent many of my school holidays taking bus 166 from Ang Mo Kio to North Bridge Road, where I would go to the National Library and MPH at Stamford Road, then walk to Funan to window shop (no money at that time, so just look-look-see-see most of the time). My trusty DIY PC stayed by my side for many years. It was a humble AMD PC that was cheaper than Intel, and I simply spent a bit of money once every 2-3 years, upgrading its internal parts like RAM, video card, and hard drive, but much of the PC largely remained intact as long as it continued to work, so I was able to own a PC on a budget by reusing and recycling whatever worked and upgrading whatever was slow or had stopped working.

(continued on the next page)

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I only entered the world of multiplayer cyber-gaming after I completed my National Service and when I was in medical school. Those were the days of Counter-Strike, and I would sometimes go to my friend's KE VII hall room to play. The entire hall was networked with LAN, and we could often find enough terrorist and counter-terrorist players! Somewhere down the road, I was introduced to LAN shops as well, mostly the cigarette-filled, dingy ones that Julia found so memorable, because they were by far the cheapest on the market. I remember paying \$2 per hour, and if we clocked enough playtime, there would be some discount. There were cleaner shops with newer and better machines, but they were also more expensive! Pretty unaffordable for a medical student. In case you are wondering, no, I did not skip any lectures or tutorials to play. I would only play after exams and during holidays. So, I was still a hardworking medical student then.

After all these years, now in my mid-40s, if not for my INSEAD course, I would still want to play more. It is a hobby that transports me to another world and another dimension, where anything is possible and everything is out of this world. In this virtual realm, I can become a sword-swinging prince, a gun-toting survivor, a Kung Fu master, a ninja turtle, a pilot in a spaceship, a magician, or a commander of the C&C Global Liberation Army. I can be anyone, anywhere. What better hobby could I possibly have?

Game on.
by Dr Luke Low Sher Guan

Julia's and Luke's e-sporting stories are so entirely engaging that mine would pale in comparison. I was a relatively well-provided kid growing up, given a PC from the time I could handle a keyboard and mouse (three years old). Since then, I have encountered the amazing worlds of Robocop, Lemmings, Doom, Wolfenstein, and of course Street Fighter, Streets of Rage, and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles! For much of my childhood, I was a loner (can you believe it?) engaged in my little splinter world of computer games (so much so I had to be dragged out of the arcade and/or my computer room by my dad).

It was only in university that I really understood the VALUES (yes there is an honour code) of Esports, when my medical school classmates (many of whom from my LAN group are still my good friends now) introduced me to a dark dingy world of LAN gaming (see Figure 1) whilst forging long lasting friendships as we cas-evaced and resuscitated each other under fire, with the ubiquitous regenerating health, just pressing F to do so! These VALUES are highly aligned with what we practise in the public service; see Table 1.

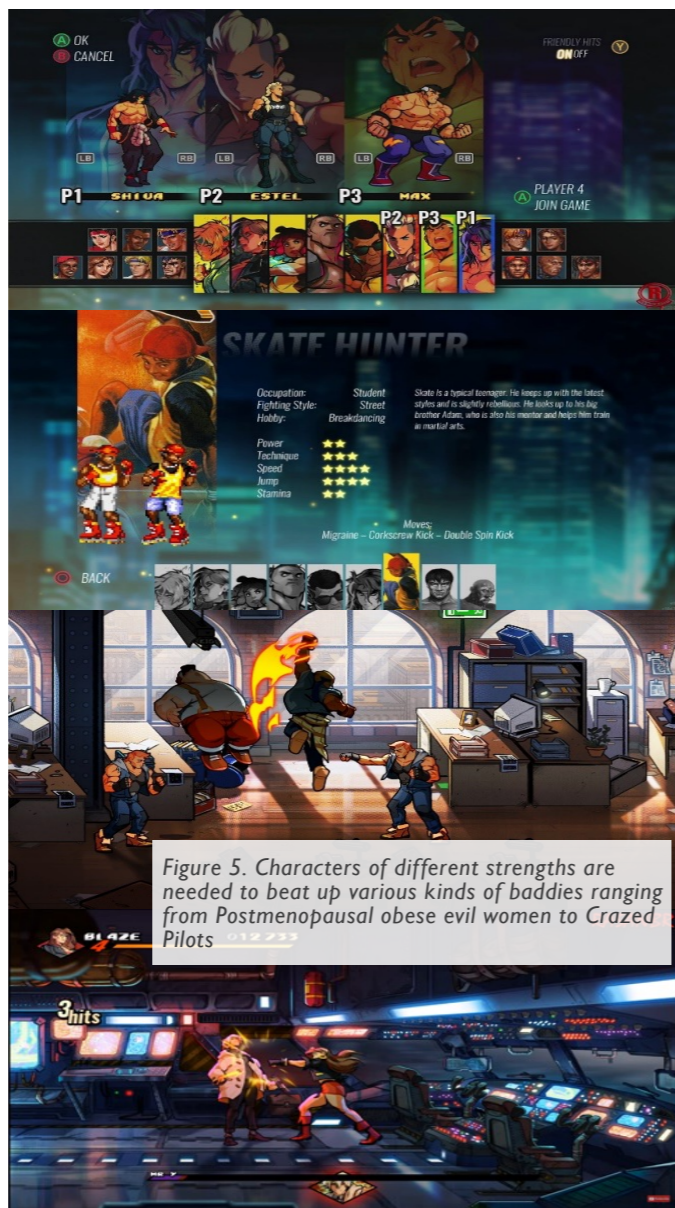
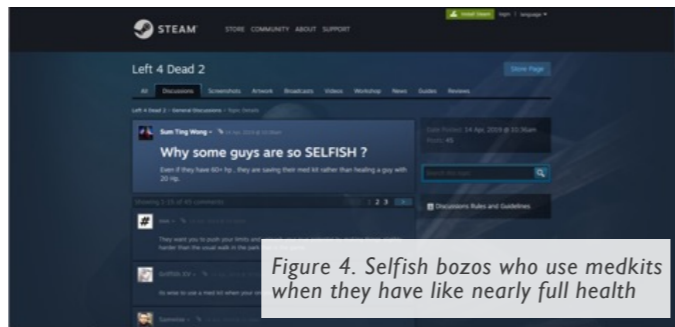


Figure 5. Characters of different strengths are needed to beat up various kinds of baddies ranging from Postmenopausal obese evil women to Crazy Pilots

All in all, I wouldn't have the world, extra ammo or even a tier 4 shotgun, if I had to see one of my teammates get ripped to shreds by a tank. The bro/sista code developed through countless rounds of L4D2, SOR4, and TMNT will serve us well across all our settings, public, private, polyclinic, CH, or general practice in our continued fight against diseases and un-health.

Table 1: Values of the Public Service and how these are reinforced through LAN Gaming

Public Service Values	How LANning helps
Compassion	Seeing your friend getting choked to death by an evil zombie with a long tongue will make you run towards said evil zombie regardless of the danger to save friend. I mean, would you hang back and look at the shiny gun that you can poach instead of helping your friend who's asphyxiating? – See Figure 2
Integrity	Saving the good stuff for your friends so you can fight as a system when you really need it – see Figure 4... Parallels in real life?
Collaboration	It takes different kinds of characters with different strengths (pun intended) to beat different kinds of bosses – see Figure 5. Parallels in real life?

We will band together as one united College of Family Physicians against the evil monsters of Diabetes, Hypertension, Hyperlipidaemia, Dementia, and the list goes on. And there's always room for more players!

Game on.
by Dr Gabriel Gerard Yee Wenjun



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Are you a Home Medical Care or Telemedicine Provider?



If you are a **standalone** home medical care or telemedicine provider (i.e., if you do not have any physical licensed premises where you are operating these services from presently), **you will need to hold an Outpatient Medical Service (OMS) licence under the Healthcare Services Act (HCSA) to offer your services in Singapore, come 26 June 2023.**

Do You Know?

For those already providing home medical care or telemedicine services from your current premises licensed under the Private Hospitals and Medical Clinics Act (PHMCA), you do not need to apply for a separate HCSA licence. Come 26 June 2023, your current PHMCA licence will be transitioned to a HCSA licence - which will include a bundle of permanent & temporary premises and remote mode of service delivery under your OMS licence, allowing you to provide medical services from your physical premises, temporary premises (e.g. house calls) or remotely (e.g. teleconsultation).

How do I get a HCSA licence?

If you do not operate under any PHMCA licence currently, please submit the form via the link (below) or scan the QR code. MOH will reach out to you on the steps needed to obtain a HCSA licence.



<https://go.gov.sg/hcsa-services-form>

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go.gov.sg/hcsa-services-form

Interested to know more about the HCSA?

The HCSA was enacted in 2020 to replace the current PHMCA so as to better safeguard patient safety and well being, as well as to strengthen the governance of healthcare service providers in this evolving healthcare landscape, while enabling the roll out of new and innovative services and models. HCSA will regulate outpatient medical services including home medical and tele-consultation services by medical doctors. For more details, **visit www.HCSA.sg**

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