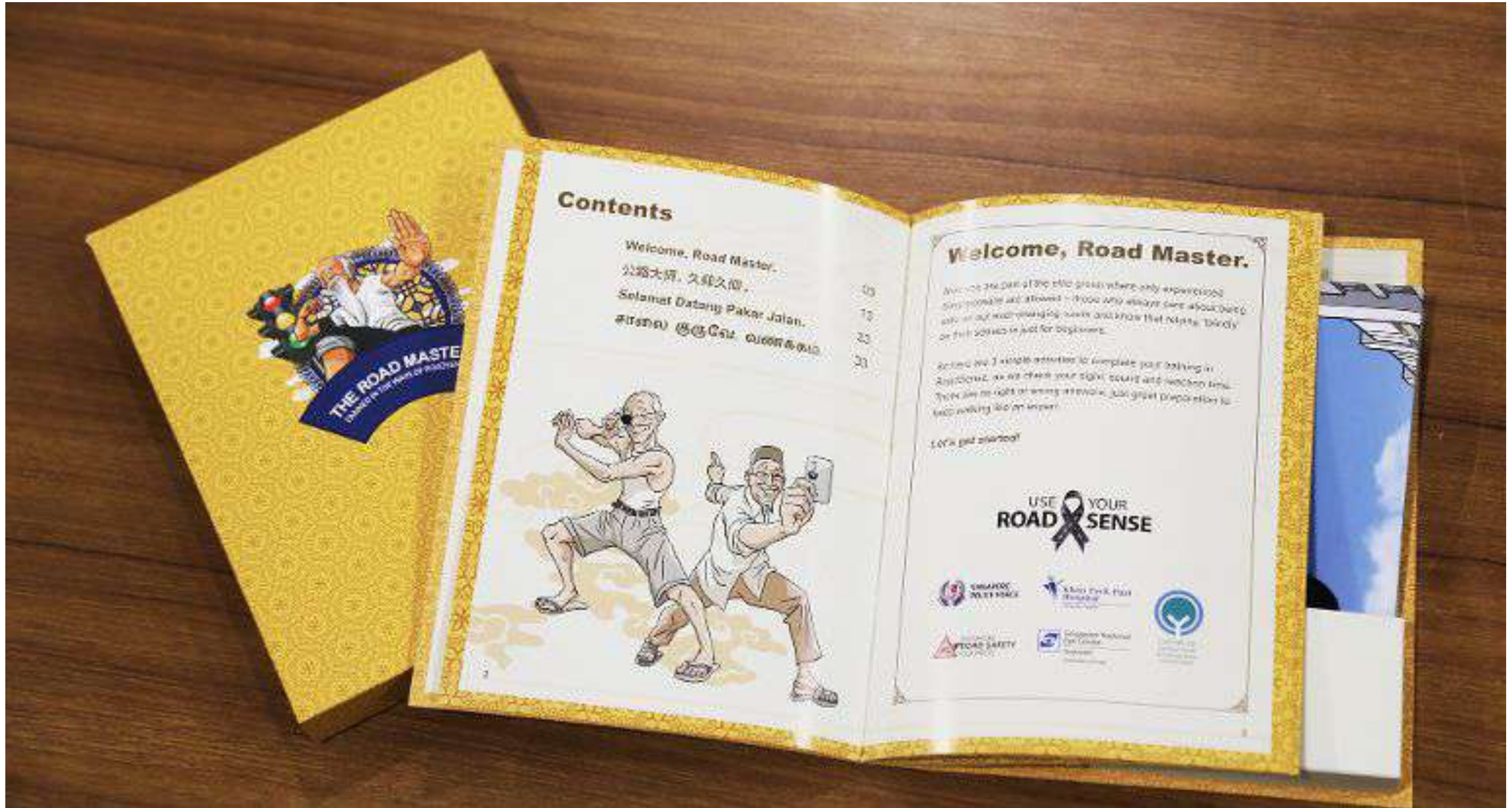


# New Traffic Police test kit for the elderly to enhance road safety awareness

By Kenneth Lim (/action/news/storiesby/storiesby/678458/storiesby.do?sortBy=latest&bylineId=1415128&pageNum=0) Posted 13 Nov 2016 21:49 Updated 13 Nov 2016 21:50



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SINGAPORE: The Traffic Police launched a new test kit on Sunday (Nov 13), aimed at increasing road safety awareness among the elderly.

Called the "Road Master Test Kit", it allows the elderly to assess their eyesight, hearing and reaction time in self-administered tests.

The kit was developed over six months, with the help of the Singapore National Eye Centre (SNEC), Khoo Teck Puat Hospital, and Lynne Lim Ear Nose Throat & Hearing Centre.

"When we think about an elderly crossing the street, we have to think about what they see, how well they see," said Lisa Ong, a principal optometrist at the SNEC.

She explained that several visual functions are involved: "As they cross the street, how about the kerbs and unevenness on the ground, will it trip them and cause them to fall? So that's about contrast sensitivity. And for the peripheral field - when they cross the street, when the vehicles or big buses are turning from the side, whether they can detect the vehicles and stop where they are to avoid the accident."

# The Hearing of the Master

Please grab a pen to keep track of your score while answering the following questions. Once you finish, tally your score.

*In collaboration with Lynne Lim Ear Nose Throat & Hearing Centre.*

1. Does your hearing make you feel embarrassed when meeting people? Yes(4)/ Sometimes(2) / No(0)
2. Does your hearing make you feel frustrated when talking to relatives? Yes(4)/ Sometimes(2) / No(0)
3. Do you have difficulty hearing when someone speaks in a whisper? Yes(4)/ Sometimes(2) / No(0)
4. Do you feel handicapped by a hearing problem? Yes(4)/ Sometimes(2) / No(0)
5. Does your hearing cause you difficulty when visiting people? Yes(4)/ Sometimes(2) / No(0)
6. Does your hearing demotivate you from attending religious services often? Yes(4)/ Sometimes(2) / No(0)
7. Does your hearing push you to have arguments with relatives? Yes(4)/ Sometimes(2) / No(0)

8. Does your hearing cause you difficulty when listening to TV or radio? Yes(4)/ Sometimes(2) / No(0)
9. Do you feel any difficulty with your hearing limits, which hampers your personal or social life? Yes(4)/ Sometimes(2) / No(0)
10. Does your hearing cause you difficulty when in a restaurant with relatives? Yes(4)/ Sometimes(2) / No(0)

Yes: 4 points  
Sometimes: 2 points  
No: 0 points

Final Score: \_\_\_\_\_



A hearing questionnaire in the test kit. (Photo: Kenneth Lim)

About 760 test kits were given out to elderly residents at a community event in Bedok on Sunday. Another 5,000 kits will be given out at various locations starting January 2017, at events and accident hotspots like Serangoon, Toa Payoh and Chinatown.

According to police statistics, 122 elderly pedestrians – those aged 60 and above – were involved in traffic accidents from January to June, compared to 104 during the same period last year.

"We are noticing a trend," said Traffic Police Commander Sam Tee, who cites jaywalking and errant drivers not looking out for or giving way to pedestrians as the main causes behind the rise in numbers. "More elderly are being injured on the road, which is why we think it is important, given the backdrop of an ageing population, and more cars on the road as well - this is why the Traffic Police is going out in a big way to reach out to all the elderly."

The Traffic Police says it hopes the kit will be a "conversation starter" for elderly pedestrians and their family members, and make them more "safety-conscious". It's something Ms Ong agrees with.

"If they were to fail the test, the first thing to flag up is - 'I need to see an eye doctor,'" she said. "If they were to come in to the hospital to get their eyes treated, at least it's early treatment, and that will prevent the eye condition from getting worse, if they have any."

Ms Ong noted that some improvements could be made for future versions.

For example, the elderly would need their reading glasses to go through the booklet. But Ms Ong pointed out that they don't usually put on the glasses when they are out crossing the street. "So it'll be better if the test kit can be done without the reading glasses - in a functional, habitual eye state, so that's something more realistic," she said.

- CNA/gs



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