

# PREMIUM LASIK SURGERY CLINIC

## LASIK's New Frontier

iLASIK is an ultra-precise, completely customised, blade-free, all-laser combination of the IntraLase™ technology and the VISX Advanced CustomVue™ Wavefront-Guided LASIK.

With iLASIK, the wait is now over!

“Is iLASIK  
for you?”

## Forum by Associate Professor Leonard Ang

### Medical Director

Premium Lasik Surgery Clinic  
The Eye & Cornea Transplant Centre

Cornea & Refractive Surgery Fellowship, Singapore  
Cornea Fellowship, University of Pennsylvania, USA  
Cornea, Refractive Surgery & Stem Cell Treatment Fellowship, Kyoto, Japan  
Cornea & Refractive Surgery Fellowship, Harvard Medical School, USA

### Dates:

19 June 2009 (Fri)  
3 July 2009 (Fri)

### Time:

7pm

### Venue:

Premium Lasik Surgery Clinic  
Paragon Medical #17-03/04

Refreshments will be served

### Agenda:

1. Advances in LASIK and refractive surgery
2. IntraLase™ bladeless LASIK: Customised flap creation
3. Understanding the difference between Customised Wavefront-Guided, Wavefront-Optimised and Aspheric LASIK
4. iLASIK & its advantages: The completely customised LASIK procedure
5. Options for those above 40 years old with presbyopia (lao hua)
6. Alternatives for those unsuitable for LASIK: Epi-LASIK & Implantable Contact Lenses (ICL)

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## MATURE WORKERS

# When age is the limit

Older jobseekers cite qualifications and skills as other obstacles

LEONG WEE KEAT

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THE 48-year-old made the journey from her home in Boon Lay to an office in Middle Road for a job interview — only to be told she was “too old”. The job Ms Jennifer De Souza was applying for?

A telemarketer.

“I was so angry I demanded my bus fare back,” she told TODAY. “Age should not be a factor in this line of work. If I’m willing to work, what’s the problem?”

Mature workers, like Ms De Souza, have found it harder to get employment in the first quarter of the year, according to labour market figures released by the Manpower Ministry yesterday.

Nearly six in 10 who were unemployed for more than six months were such workers. Compared with the same period last year, the number of long-term jobless people have doubled from 7,500 to 16,600 this year. And familiar

faces have been turning up at meet-the-people-sessions, Members of Parliament have stated.

These jobseekers cite a combination of age, skills and education qualifications as obstacles to their re-employment.

**Age should not be a factor in this line of work. If I’m willing to work, what’s the problem?**

Ms Jennifer De Souza, 48, on her application for a job as a telemarketer

Those with secondary education or lower are the hardest hit. Ms De Souza, who has O-level qualifications, for example, sent out more than 600 job applications over six months before she finally landed a job as an administrator in April.

To help mature workers overcome any physical limitation, labour MP Halimah Jacob suggested employers consider reducing working hours — from eight to six or even to four hours — to allow flexibility.

However, even as various options — such as re-training, job matching and highlighting vacancies — have been made available to mature jobseekers, some have been adamant as to the kind of jobs they would do.

MP Cynthia Phua said some insist on being hired as security guards even though jobs as cleaners are readily available.

At Punggol Central, residents not matched with job offers are given other helping hands: The Sengkang Community Club lent out 14 pushcarts and also entrusted its car park to four elderly residents to manage. The residents take home any profits.

Mr Goh Cher Chye, 53, takes home between \$70 to \$300 a month selling toys from a pushcart. Even though he is grateful for the help provided, Mr Goh’s wife had to re-enter the workforce to supplement the family’s income.

Ms De Souza, who is single, is slightly better off — her \$800 monthly salary helps to cover the monthly \$500 HDB mortgage.

“It is not great, but it beats sitting around at home,” she said.

## Q1 labour market: Worse than expected

» CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The numbers would have been worse, if not for Jobs Credit and the Skills Programme for Upgrading and Resilience (Spur), he noted.

Government support for training is crucial for employers as it is a consistent source of support in an uncertain period, said Singapore National Employers Federation vice-president Bob Tan.

“Employers are finding it difficult to make decisions about their workers because it’s such a volatile period.”

He pointed out that the 15-per cent decline in productivity could be due to employers holding on to workers even as output fell.

### HOW PMETS FARED

Slightly more than half (54 per cent) of residents — that is, Singaporeans and Permanent Residents — made redundant were professionals, managers, executives and technicians (PMETs), similar to the proportion in the previous quarter.

Retrenched PMETs took a longer time to find new jobs, with re-employment rates falling sharply from 69 per cent to 48 per cent. Degree-holders had the lowest

### THE BIG PICTURE

	Q4'08/Dec	Q1/March
<b>Change in total employment</b>	<b>21,300</b>	<b>-6,200</b>
Redundancies	9,410	12,760
Unemployment rate	2.5%	3.3%*
Unemployed residents	71,800	95,700*
Re-employed within 5 months	70%	51%
Job vacancies	26,100	21,000
Productivity	-12%	-15%
Real wages	-2.8%	-5.8%

\*SEASONALLY ADJUSTED

re-employment rate after those with primary education and below.

This was despite the fact that vacancies for PMETs formed the largest share of the jobs pool — at 55 per cent — with 11,500 jobs mainly in community, social and personal services.

Pointing out that even tertiary-educated residents and PMETs were seeing unemployment rates jump by 67 per cent, Assoc Prof Shandre said: “Spur will have to be refined further to reflect their needs and help them adapt to the new types of jobs that will emerge.”

Meanwhile, one in three PMETs found themselves working shorter work-weeks, compared to one in

four a year ago.

Ms Eve Lim, director of recruitment and human resources consultancy GMP Group, said these workers were likely to come from the administrative fields related to sectors that have experienced a slowdown, such as manufacturing and electronics.

“We haven’t seen it in jobs where you are servicing clients, like sales,” she said.

These shortened weeks result in pay cuts of about 10 per cent on average. “This has financial impact for workers, but we have also seen employers helping to cover half of the cost to the worker,” said Ms Lim.