

Setback turns out to be a blessing



Reuben Ng,
25,
researcher

AT THE end of his first year in junior college, Mr Reuben Ng's dream of becoming a doctor was dashed.

He scored poorly in his promotional examination and could not continue with the triple science-maths combination then needed to get into medical school.

"I was devastated. My parents had always imbued in me a desire to contribute back to society. With medicine, I could have," the 25-year-old says. His father, Mr Terence Ng, 59, is a retired shipping officer and mother Lucia Ng, 52, a clerk.

But the setback led him to stumble into the field of psychology.

By the time he enrolled at National University of Singapore, he had read so much about it that he chose to specialise in it.

In July, he became the world's first undergraduate and the youngest recipient ever of the Seisoh Sukemune/Bruce Bain Early Career Research award, a prestigious international psychology research award.

He won it for his research on the impact of organisational stress on the Singapore Police Force. He is now writing his Masters thesis – how youth can better cope with anxiety, anger, aggression and depression – on a Nanyang Technological University research scholarship.



PHOTO: JOYCE FANG

WINNER: Mr Ng won an award for his work on stress in the police force.