

PRESS RELEASE**CANCER RESEARCH MALAYSIA SCIENTISTS WINS NEWTON FUND IMPACT SCHEME TO FIND NEW WAYS OF TREATING ORAL CANCER**

KUALA LUMPUR, 27 April 2020 – Prof Dr Cheong Sok-Ching, FASc, Senior Group Leader from Cancer Research Malaysia and her team have won the Newton Fund Impact Scheme (NFIS) from the Medical Research Council (UK) and MIGHT (Malaysian Industry-Government Group for High Technology) for their work aimed at accelerating the discovery of new cancer medicines in oral cancer. NFIS is delivered by the British Council in partnership with UK Research and Innovation on behalf of all Newton Fund delivery partners.

Previously, using powerful gene-editing techniques and unique Asian cancer cell lines established in Cancer Research Malaysia, Prof Cheong's team had identified genes that are essential for the growth of oral cancer cells. Through this award, they will be building on the long-term collaboration between researchers at the Wellcome Sanger Institute in Cambridge and Cancer Research Malaysia to use cutting edge technologies to identify drugs that could knockout these essential genes, thereby killing the cancers.

“Oral cancer is more common in Asia and is the most common cause of cancer related deaths in men in India. As we move into an era of precision medicine, we have reached a turning point where we can now use powerful technologies to develop more effective cancer therapies. I am delighted that the work that we do has been recognised through this award and we hope that this work will translate into urgently needed new therapies for patients with oral cancer – a cancer which is hard to treat,” said Prof Cheong.

Dr Mathew Garnett of the Wellcome Sanger Institute said: “Our efforts at the Institute have focused on finding ways to improve cancer treatments, and much of them focus on cancers common in European populations. But the best science doesn't happen in isolation, so we are delighted that this award will enable us to continue our collaboration with Cancer Research Malaysia to ensure that cutting-edge technologies can also be applied to a condition like oral cancer which is more common among Asians.”

Offering his congratulations, H.E. Charles Hay, British High Commissioner to Malaysia said, “This award not only celebrates the great work by Cancer Research Malaysia, it shows how the Newton-Ungku Omar Fund can support potentially life-saving medical research. I look forward to more science and innovation partnerships between the UK and Malaysia in the future.”

In his congratulatory message, Y.A.M. Tunku Tan Sri Imran Ibni Almarhum Tuanku Ja'afar, the Chairman of Yayasan Sime Darby said, “We are proud that our Malaysian scientists supported by Yayasan Sime Darby have once again won an international award. Yayasan Sime Darby recognises that there are simply not enough cancer researchers in Malaysia, that research is hard and takes a long time. We are delighted that our longstanding sponsorship of Malaysian scientists have paid off in enabling one big step forward in finding a cure for Asian cancers.”

Puan Lita Osman, Chief Executive of Yayasan PETRONAS in her congratulatory wishes, said, “We're happy to note that the winning scientists are from Cancer Research Malaysia. Since



2001, PETRONAS has supported the establishment of cutting-edge facilities to ensure the sustenance of the cancer research programs right here in Malaysia. We are truly delighted that this long-term partnership continues to nurture more Malaysians scientists to do significant work internationally benefiting the cancer patients globally.”

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About Cancer Research Malaysia

Cancer Research Malaysia is a Malaysian charity dedicated to saving lives through research, focusing on Asians. Cancer Research Malaysia is reliant entirely on research grants and charitable donations from the public and corporates for its life-saving research. Cancer Research Malaysia has been at the heart of making sure that research does not miss Asians and its research includes the discovery of new therapies, the development of precision medicine for Asians and ensuring that there is access to life-saving therapies. Together with its partners and supporters, Cancer Research Malaysia’s vision is a future free of the fear of cancer. For more information: www.cancerresearch.my or follow us at

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[The Wellcome Sanger Institute](#)

The Wellcome Sanger Institute is a world leading genomics research centre. We undertake large-scale research that forms the foundations of knowledge in biology and medicine. We are open and collaborative; our data, results, tools and technologies are shared across the globe to advance science. Our ambition is vast – we take on projects that are not possible anywhere else. We use the power of genome sequencing to understand and harness the information in DNA. Funded by Wellcome, we have the freedom and support to push the boundaries of genomics. Our findings are used to improve health and to understand life on Earth. Find out more at www.sanger.ac.uk or follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and on our [Blog](#).

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