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Global Cancer Research Initiative Lands in East Malaysia: AACR on Campus Highlights Sarawak's Role in The Advancement and Equitable Care of Cancer Patients

KUCHING, 14th November, 2025 – The American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) and Cancer Research Malaysia (CRM) officially inaugurated the AACR on Campus-Malaysia programme in Kuching today at the Waterfront Hotel. This is the first time the global education and training initiative has been held in East Malaysia, reinforcing the region's growing capabilities in cancer science. It was attended by over 180 clinicians and young researchers from Sarawak, other states in Malaysia and from 15 other countries.

The two-day event (November 13–14) is jointly organised by the AACR, CRM and local universities UNIMAS and Swinburne University of Technology Sarawak to equip early-career researchers and clinicians with essential knowledge, skills, and networking opportunities tailored to Sarawak's unique cancer context.

The programme was officially opened by The Honourable Datuk Amar Professor Dr Sim Kui Hian, Deputy Premier of Sarawak, Minister of Public Health, Housing and Local Government, Sarawak.

Sarawak's Strategic Role in Global Research

The AACR on Campus programme highlights the critical role Sarawak plays in advancing cancer research and healthcare delivery in the region.

Professor Dr Cheong Sok Ching, Chief Scientific Officer of Cancer Research Malaysia and Chairperson of the conference, emphasised the strategic importance of hosting the event in Kuching.

"We are proud to showcase the significant progress being made here. The establishment of the Sarawak General Hospital (SGH) Phase 1 'First-in-Man' Clinical Trial Unit is a tremendous achievement, signalling Sarawak's ability to host world-class clinical research. The SGH Clinical Research Centre has already been recognized as Malaysia's Top Performing Clinical Research Site, with many global trials conducted to date."

She also added, “Scientific breakthroughs only matter when they reach the people who need them most. That is why AACR on Campus places equal emphasis on implementation science — ensuring that discovery and delivery go hand in hand.”

The program brings together world-renowned speakers and experts to focus on locally relevant topics, including Advancement and Innovation in Cancer Immunotherapy; Leveraging Cancer Genomics for Precision Oncology; Early Detection, Prevention, Screening and Implementation; and Innovations and Best Practices in Early Clinical Trial Design.

The curriculum is designed to support the professional development of young scientists in areas vital for career progression. One of the notable sessions is the Scholarly Publishing in Cancer Research: Led by Dr. Lisa Situ, Assistant Editor of the AACR journal *Cancer Discovery*, provided attendees with insights into manuscript writing and the peer review process. Another session is the Successful Grantsmanship and Grants Administration: Focused on grant writing, application best practices, and AACR Grants and Awards Programs, led by Dr. Yixian (John) Zhang, Vice President, Research and Grants Administration, AACR.

A crucial component of the Kuching program is a panel session dedicated to Cancer Disparities, Advocacy, and Care. This session aims to facilitate actionable insights on addressing the economic-social determinants of unequal cancer outcomes and adapting best practices for cancer care delivery in the Malaysian and Southeast Asian context.

Professor Dr Elizabeth M. Jaffee, Chair of the AACR Global Affairs Committee, commented on the significance of this local focus, "The AACR is dedicated to accelerating the conquest of cancer globally. The format of AACR on Campus is unique in that it effectively bridges the translational gap between preclinical, clinical, and implementation studies. By supporting the expansion of research capacity in Malaysia and the region, we are nurturing a pipeline of scientists who can make discoveries that resonate globally while ensuring innovation reaches every community."

The event fosters the development of local scientific leadership, recognising the growing capabilities of UNIMAS and Swinburne University of Technology Sarawak in biomedical research and data science and the Sarawak Research and Development Council (SRDC)'s investments in developing research talent.

“AACR on Campus – Malaysia is a platform for hope, empowering young researchers to dream bigger and make discoveries that save lives. We are proud to support an initiative where scientific breakthroughs translate into real-world impact. True legacy goes beyond events, touching communities and transforming lives,” said Amelia Roziman, CEO of Business Events Sarawak (BESarawak).

The event is supported by BESarawak and several local and international partners, reinforcing Sarawak’s growing reputation as a hub for world-class biomedical research and knowledge exchange.

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About AACR

The American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) is the first and largest cancer research organization in the world, with more than 59,000 members residing in 142 countries and territories.



The AACR is dedicated to accelerating the conquest of cancer through research, education, communication, and collaboration.

About Cancer Research Malaysia (CRMY)

Founded in 2000, Cancer Research Malaysia (CRMY) is the nation's first and only independent, non-profit cancer research organisation dedicated to improving cancer outcomes for Asians. For 25 years, CRMY has delivered cutting-edge research and community solutions that reflect the unique genetics, lifestyles and healthcare needs across Asia, funded entirely by donations and research grants.

CRMY leads pioneering programmes in breast, oral, nasopharyngeal, lung and hereditary cancers. Its breakthroughs include Asia's most comprehensive breast-cancer genomic studies, a made-in-Malaysia cancer vaccine now advancing towards clinical trials, and MeMoSA®, an AI-enabled mobile screening innovation for early oral cancer detection, particularly for underserved communities.

Beyond laboratories, CRMY champions real-world impact through Malaysia's first patient navigation programme known as NORA (Navigation, Outreach & Resource Access), improving treatment access and survival for underserved communities nationwide. CRMY has also mainstreamed genetic testing and counselling in Malaysia, enabling prevention and early detection for hereditary cancers.

As it marks 25 years, CRMY remains committed to advancing equitable, impactful cancer innovations for Malaysia and Asia.

Learn more or donate at www.cancerresearch.my

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Datuk Amar Professor Dr Sim Kui Hian, Deputy Premier of Sarawak, Minister of Public Health, Housing and Local Government, Sarawak sitting in the centre at AACR on Campus event



Datuk Amar Professor Dr Sim Kui Hian, Deputy Premier of Sarawak, Minister of Public Health, Housing and Local Government, Sarawak sitting in the centre at