PRESS RELEASE

NCCS AND IMCB TO COLLABORATE ON RESEARCH FOR NEW TREATMENTS TO BENEFIT CANCER PATIENTS

Knowledge and resources sharing among scientists will enhance research work and translate findings from the bench to the clinics.

**Singapore, 31 August 2015** – The National Cancer Centre Singapore (NCCS) and A*STAR’s Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology (IMCB) have entered into a partnership to enable closer collaboration and networking among researchers from the two institutions. This move will benefit both parties through the sharing of knowledge among the scientists. The ultimate aim is to develop new therapeutic treatments for cancer patients.

Under this collaboration, four Principal Investigators (PIs) from each institution will hold joint appointments at the respective institutions. These PIs each have outstanding expertise in different areas of oncology research ranging from developmental biology to cancer genomics. Detailed profiles of the PIs can be found in Appendix A.

IMCB focuses on discovery and translational research on human diseases to further understand the diseases and design therapeutic strategies against them. In the area of cancer, IMCB has been conducting cutting edge research in cancer genetics and therapeutics. At NCCS, its researchers and clinician scientists conduct Basic Research in medical sciences and clinical trials besides dealing with Translational Research.

“This collaboration will enhance translational research, where our scientists can further share resources and exchange knowledge from the basic sciences into the development of new treatments, as well as to translate the findings from clinical trials into everyday practice,” said Prof Soo Khee Chee, NCCS Director.
Prof Hong Wanjin, Executive Director, IMCB said, “With IMCB’s deep capabilities in human biology and oncology research, and the strong clinical expertise at NCCS, I am confident that the collaboration will yield breakthroughs that can be translated into novel, effective therapeutics to address unmet medical need for cancer.”

To commemorate this momentous event, an inaugural Joint Oncology Symposium will be held on 31 August 2015 to set the vision of the two institutions. A total of eight basic and translational research PIs will present papers on various oncology research topics ranging from signalling, genomics, biomarker discovery, xenograft and other animal models. In addition, four clinicians will share the clinical challenges that can be addressed through the cooperative efforts with basic and translational research scientists.

Reporters are invited to attend the Joint Oncology Symposium. The details are as follows:

Date : 31 August 2015, Monday
Time : 8.00am
Venue : Auditorium, Level 4
   National Cancer Centre Singapore
   11 Hospital Drive
   Singapore 169610

About the National Cancer Centre Singapore
National Cancer Centre Singapore (NCCS) provides a holistic and multidisciplinary approach to cancer treatment and patient care. We treat almost 70 per cent of the public sector oncology cases, and they are benefiting from the sub-specialisation of our clinical oncologists. NCCS is also accredited by the US-based Joint Commission International for its quality patient care and safety.

To deliver among the best in cancer treatment and care, our clinicians work closely with our scientists who conduct robust cutting-edge clinical and translational research programmes which have been internationally recognised. NCCS strives to be a global leading cancer centre, and shares its expertise and knowledge by offering training to local and overseas medical professionals. www.nccs.com.sg

About the A*STAR’s Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology

About the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR)
The Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR) is Singapore’s lead public sector agency that fosters world-class scientific research and talent to drive economic
growth and transform Singapore into a vibrant knowledge-based and innovation driven economy.

In line with its mission-oriented mandate, A*STAR spearheads research and development in fields that are essential to growing Singapore’s manufacturing sector and catalysing new growth industries. A*STAR supports these economic clusters by providing intellectual, human and industrial capital to its partners in industry.

A*STAR oversees 18 biomedical sciences and physical sciences and engineering research entities, located in Biopolis and Fusionopolis, as well as their vicinity. These two R&D hubs house a bustling and diverse community of local and international research scientists and engineers from A*STAR’s research entities as well as a growing number of corporate laboratories.

For more information on A*STAR, please visit [www.a-star.edu.sg](http://www.a-star.edu.sg).

**About the Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology (IMCB)**

The Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology (IMCB) was launched on 23 January 1985, with its official opening ceremony held on 2 October 1987 at the National University of Singapore (NUS). It subsequently became an autonomous research institute (RI) of A*STAR, moving to Biopolis in 2004. IMCB’s vision is to be a premier cell and molecular biology institute which addresses the mechanistic basis of human diseases and its mission is to conduct cutting-edge discovery research in disease pathways; to groom early career researchers to be future leaders in research; and to collaborate with medical and industry communities for research impact. IMCB plays an important role training and recruiting scientific talents, and has contributed to the development of other research entities in Singapore. Its success in fostering a biomedical research culture in Singapore has catalysed Singapore’s transformation into an international hub for biomedical research, development and innovation.

Funded primarily by the Biomedical Research Council (BMRC) of A*STAR, IMCB’s current discovery research includes cell biology in health and disease; animal models of development & disease; cancer & stem cell genetics & genomics; and structural biology & drug discovery. IMCB’s translational research includes humanised model organisms for human diseases; systems approach for disease target identification & validation; and protein engineering & antibody development for diagnostics & therapeutics. Research activities in IMCB are supported by cutting edge infrastructure and facilities including quantitative proteomics; humanised mice; mouse models of human cancer; protein crystallography X-ray; zebrafish for drug metabolism & toxicology; advanced molecular histopathology; imaging & electron microscopy; and DNA sequencing.

For more information about IMCB, visit [www.imcb.a-star.edu.sg](http://www.imcb.a-star.edu.sg)

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For further information, please contact NCCS Corporate Communications Department:
Appendix A

NCCS Private Investigators

1. Professor Kanaga SABAPATHY

Kanaga Sabapathy obtained his B.Sc (Hons) degree in Zoology from the NUS, and his Ph.D. in Molecular & Cellular Immunology from the IMCB, Singapore. His post-doctoral work was conducted at the Institute of Molecular Pathology in Vienna with Dr Erwin Wagner, studying stress signalling using genetically-engineered mice. He has since been at the National Cancer Centre Singapore for the last 14 years, as the Head of the Laboratory of Molecular Carcinogenesis, and in the last 3 years as the overall Head of the Division of Cellular & Molecular Research, overseeing its research activities. He is also the Research Director of the Academic Clinical Program in Oncology at SingHealth. Dr Sabapathy is a Professor with the Cancer and Stem Cell Biology Program at Duke-NUS, and a joint Professor with the Department of Biochemistry at NUS. His research focus is aimed at understanding the molecular nature of cancer so as to design effective targeted-therapies against the disease.

2. Professor Bin Tean TEH

Professor Teh received his M.D. from the University of Queensland, Australia in 1992 and his Ph.D degree from Karolinska Institute, Sweden in 1997. In 2000, Professor Teh joined the Van Andel Research Institute (VARI) as a senior Scientific Investigator, heading the Laboratory of Cancer genetics. Later, he was appointed as the director of the National Cancer Centre Singapore (NCCS)-VARI laboratory, bridging between translational research and clinical medicine. From 2010 until now, he is a Singapore Translational Research (STaR) Investigator, focusing on Asian Cancer Genomics.

3. Professor Kam Man HUI

After his Ph.D at the Northwestern University Medical School in Chicago in 1982, Professor Hui joined the Royal London Hospital and the National Institute for Medical Research in London in 1984. In 1987, Professor Hui was recruited as a founding faculty member at the newly established Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology. In 1997, Professor Hui was recruited to establish the research facility at the National Cancer Centre Singapore. Professor Hui’s research combines molecular biology, genomics tools, animal models, imaging technologies and the development of novel diagnostic platforms to decipher the molecular basis of hepatocarcinogenesis.

4. Professor Hung The HUYNH

Prof Huynh is an adjunct professor at National University Singapore (Singapore) and McGill University (Canada). He is also Principal Investigator of Laboratory of Molecular Endocrinology at National Cancer Centre Singapore. His research interest is to develop patient-derived xenograft (PDX) models. He has published as the first or corresponding author in 115 peer-reviewed journals. He has
collaborated with various pharmaceutical companies and academic institutions to identify novel treatments for gastric cancer and hepatocellular carcinoma.

**IMCB Private Investigators**

5. **Professor Vinay TERGAONKAR**

Prof Vinay Tergaonkar obtained his Ph.D in 2001, and during his graduate studies was awarded an international cancer society (UICC) fellowship for collaborative research at Tufts University, Boston. He has been a fellow (2001-2004) and a special fellow (2004-present) of the Leukaemia and Lymphoma Society of America and conducted his postdoctoral studies at the Salk Institute, La Jolla. He joined IMCB in late 2005 as Principal Investigator (Assistant Professor) and became a Senior Principal Investigator (Associate Professor) in 2010 and Research Director (Professor) in 2015. He has been invited to speak at various international venues such as the Barossa and Hunter valley meetings in Australia, Genes & Cancer meeting in UK, Argentine Pharmacological society meeting in Buenos Aires, Aichi and Japanese Cancer Society meetings in Japan and the Keystone Symposia. He serves on Editorial Boards of 1) Biochemical Journal 2) Critical Reviews in Oncology/Haematology, 3) BMC Research Notes and 4) Telomeres and Telomerase. He has received international recognition for his work including the British council development award (2014) and the Premier's fellowship from Government of South Australia (2015).

6. **Associate Professor Ernesto GUCCIONE**

A/Prof Ernesto Guccione obtained his Master's degree in Medical Biotechnology in 2000 from Bologna University and his Ph.D in 2004 from the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB), Trieste, Italy. He did his postdoctoral work at the European Institute of Oncology (Milan, Italy) where he studied the role of chromatin in defining c-Myc target site recognition. He also identified PRMT6, a member of the Protein Arginine MethylTransferase family, as an important enzyme in controlling transcriptional repression. During his postdoctoral training, he spent four months as an EMBO fellow in the laboratory of J.LaBaer at Harvard Institute of Proteomics. He is now a Senior Principal Investigator at IMCB, where he set up his lab in 2008.

7. **Professor Qi ZENG**

Prof Qi Zeng studied her Ph.D in Roswell Park Memorial Institute (RPMI, USA) and IMCB. She obtained her Ph.D in 1993 from National University of Singapore. She has been using animal models to study human diseases for decades. In 2011, she proposed a new concept of 'Targeting Intracellular Oncoproteins with Antibody Therapy or Vaccination to treat cancer'. She is a pioneer in using the unconventional approach of immunotherapy targeting intracellular oncoproteins for blocking tumour growth in cancer mice. Her team demonstrated that PRL-1 and PRL-3 monoclonal antibodies can inhibit experimental metastatic tumours expressing their respective antigens. In 2009, Exploit Technologies Pte Ltd (ETPL, A*STAR) awarded her group a Flagship grant of $3.1 million for anticancer therapy in mice: [http://www.imcb.a-star.edu.sg/newsarchive/090309a.php](http://www.imcb.a-star.edu.sg/newsarchive/090309a.php) and an additional award of $1.5 million Gap fund to work until pre-clinical trials.

8. **Assistant Professor Qingfeng CHEN**

Assistant Prof Qingfeng Chen received his Ph.D in 2008 from University of Science and Technology of China. After 3 years of postdoctoral training in Singapore-MIT Alliance for Research and Technology, he joined the Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology, A*STAR as a group leader in 2012
to establish the humanised mouse unit. He is currently a Principal Investigator in IMCB, joint Principal Investigator in National Cancer Centre Singapore and adjunct assistant professor in Department of Microbiology, National University of Singapore. His research interest is developing humanised mouse models for the study of human infectious diseases, cancers, autoimmune diseases and stem cells.