NUS National University of Singapore | NUS Centre for Cancer Research
Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine

JAN – MAR 2026
VOLUME 18

N2CR INSIGHTS

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF N2CR

Latest News

N2CR Info & Networking Session: 23 Jan 2026

Thank you to everyone who joined the N2CR Information & Networking Session. The event highlighted upcoming seed funding opportunities, new initiatives, and resources to support our community.

We were pleased to see lively discussions continue during the Networking Session in the evening, where members connected, exchanged ideas, and celebrated the start of 2026 together.

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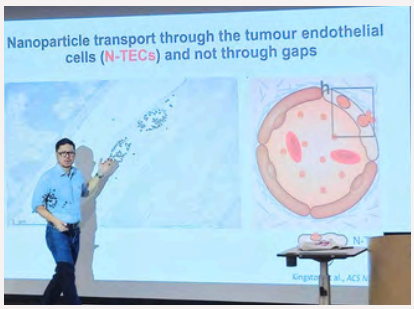
N2CR Invited Speaker Seminar



On 27 Jan 2026, N2CR hosted Prof Warren Chan, Dean of the College of Engineering at NTU, who delivered an insightful lecture on *'The Challenge of Delivering Nanoparticles to Solid Tumours'*.
He explored the complexities of nanoparticle delivery and shared promising directions that could transform cancer treatment.

N2CR Postdoc & Graduate Student Club

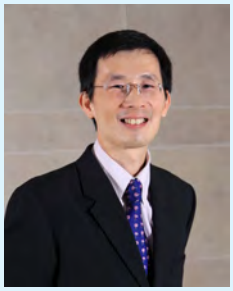
This quarter, the Club welcomed two inspiring speakers:
1) 30 Jan: Dr Norbert Tay, Postdoctoral Fellow under Prof Evan T. Keller at the University of Michigan, presented *'Spatial Biology and its Myriad of Tools'*.

2) 27 Mar: Dr Deepika Raman, Scientific Project Leader from EDDC, A*Star, shared her journey in *'From Curiosity to Candidates: My Path from Postdoc to Preclinical Drug Development'*

Beyond Medicine Research Festival

The Beyond Medicine Research Festival held on 9 Jan 2026 brought together NUS Medicine MBBS Phase II students for an inspiring afternoon of research and discovery. They engaged with Dr. Joshua Tay (Otolaryngology, NUS & NUH) and Dr. Cheong Jit Kong (Biochemistry, NUS), gaining valuable insights into their projects and the wider impact of research. Thank you to all who made the festival a success — together, we continue to advance the frontiers of medicine.

The Straits Times Highlights Rare Cancer Therapy

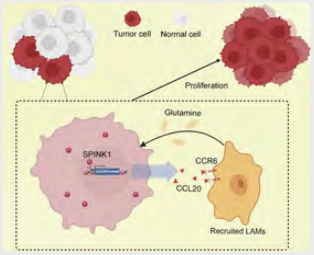


Our N2CR Director, Prof Goh Boon Cher, was featured in The Straits Times for his insights on salivary gland cancer. He explained that the rarity and diversity of these cancers make treatment challenging once surgery and radiotherapy are no longer effective, underscoring the importance of molecular testing and clinical trials to guide targeted therapies.

The article also highlighted NCIS patients who have responded well to such treatments, demonstrating the promise of precision medicine in improving outcomes.

Uncovering an Aggressive Form of Liver Cancer

(Journal of Advanced Research; ... Gautam Sethi, Yunlu Jia, Jian Ruan)



Intrahepatic cholangiocarcinoma (ICC) is a fast-growing cancer that starts in the bile ducts inside the liver, and it is difficult to treat because patients' tumours can behave very differently. In this study, A/Prof Gautam Sethi and his collaborators used advanced laboratory methods to classify ICC tumours into distinct groups based on their molecular features. They identified a particularly aggressive group marked by high levels of a protein called SPINK1.

The team found that these SPINK1-high tumour cells can influence nearby immune cells to promote cancer growth. The tumour releases a chemical signal that attracts certain macrophages (a type of immune cell). These macrophages then help create a glutamine-rich environment—glutamine is a nutrient that cancer cells can use as fuel—allowing the tumour to spread easily. The findings suggest SPINK1 could help identify higher-risk patients and point to new treatment strategies, such as blocking glutamine supply or disrupting key tumour-immune signalling.

A Gene Switch that Fuels Myeloma Growth

(Apoptosis; ... Wee-Joo Chng, Xiaoxiang Rong, Yunlu Jia)

Multiple myeloma is a type of blood cancer that affects plasma cells, a kind of white blood cell found in the bone marrow. These cells normally help fight infections by producing antibodies.

In this study, co-led by N2CR member Prof Chng Wee Joo and team, which also includes N2CR member Dr Zhou Jianbiao, the researchers investigated how super enhancer (SE)-driven expression of SMC4 contributes to the progression of multiple myeloma (MM). SMC4 promotes cancer progression by activating the IFI16-STING signaling pathway, leading to increased production of pro-inflammatory cytokines. This creates a tumour-supportive microenvironment that enhances myeloma cell survival and proliferation. Inhibiting this pathway suppresses SMC4-driven oncogenic effects, suggesting a potential therapeutic target.

Announcements

N2CR 2026 Seed Grant Calls

COMPASS

Charting the Future of Precision Oncology

Apply by: 15 Apr 2026, 9am

1. **Foresight**
2. **Refresh**
3. **Companion to Cancer Care**

For queries, please email: n2cr@nus.edu.sg

Visit our Site-Specific Resources for the following services

- Tissue Requisition and Tissue Microarray (TMA)
- Histology Services
- Facility Booking

Please click here for further information or email n2cr@nus.edu.sg with any queries.

N2CR Bulletin

Join our WhatsApp group for N2CR updates on seminars, conferences, grants, and events.

- **Connect**
- **Share**
- **Collaborate**

Upcoming Events

Industry Talk
- Avecris Pte Ltd -

Non-Viral RNA Suicide Gene Therapy for Cancer

Friday, 17 April 2026
Time: 3 pm to 4 pm
CRC Auditorium, MD11

Lunch & Learn Seminar
- Singleron Biotechnologies -

- **Working with FFPE samples and looking to unlock the full transcriptome?**
- **Looking to profile coding and non-coding RNAs?**

Wednesday, 22 April 2026
Time: 12.00 pm to 12.30 pm
MD1 (03-01C)