



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **NUS Medicine boosts research into ageing with appointment of leading scientist**

#### ***Professor Brian K. Kennedy will lead research to extend healthspan in Singapore***

*Singapore, 22 August 2017* — An internationally renowned expert has been appointed to lead ongoing efforts at the National University of Singapore (NUS) to understand the human ageing process and how to extend the period of healthy life or healthspan.

Professor Brian K. Kennedy's appointment as a Distinguished Professor in the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine's Departments of Biochemistry and Physiology, and Director of the Centre for Healthy Ageing at the National University Health System (NUHS), will boost pre-clinical and clinical ageing studies.

Prof Kennedy was the President and CEO of the Buck Institute for Research on Aging in California from 2010 to 2016. During his PhD studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he became interested in ageing and performed research leading to the identification of Sirtuins as modulators of ageing. He became a faculty member at the University of Washington and continued ageing research, playing a major role in the identification of the mTOR pathway as a central one in the ageing process. Since 2016, Prof Kennedy has been contributing to the development of research in ageing in Singapore. In January 2017, he further strengthened his commitment by assuming an appointment as Visiting Parkway Pantai Professor in Medicine and Healthy Ageing at NUS Medicine, before taking on the appointment as Distinguished Professor.

The focus on understanding the unique biology of human ageing in Singapore is driven by the dramatic demographic shifts in the Singapore population, which is getting older at rates nearly unparalleled in the world. Ageing is recognised as the biggest risk factor for a wide range of chronic diseases that are increasing healthcare costs and impairing life quality in elderly people. By understanding ageing and developing clinical interventions, it may be possible to extend human healthspan, the disease-free and functional part of life. Much thought and investment have been expended on efforts to improve the physical and social environment for the elderly in Singapore, though biomedical approaches leveraging on the latest scientific understanding of ageing have yet to be fully applied locally.

"Singapore has a unique opportunity to become a leader in research on human ageing, particularly its clinical application," said Prof Kennedy. "It is already possible to extend lifespan and healthspan in animal models and the time has come for human testing. With its ageing

population and, importantly, its progressive approach to develop the best and most efficient healthcare system, Singapore is poised to take the lead in human ageing studies. My goal is to work with the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine to help Singaporeans extend their healthspan – to live healthily for as long as possible.”

In this regard, Prof Kennedy will be developing pre-clinical and clinical ageing programmes for the NUHS, of which the School is a founding institutional member. He will also develop his own research programme, which seeks to identify the fundamental mechanisms driving ageing, while maintaining his research team at the Buck Institute in the U.S. for the foreseeable future.

NUS Medicine Dean and Deputy Chief Executive of the NUHS, Associate Professor Yeoh Khay Guan reinforced the importance of understanding healthy ageing and applying the lessons to life. “Prof Kennedy is an internationally renowned expert in research on ageing, and we are excited to have him on board at NUS to continue his research in extending healthspan and to help Singaporeans live long and healthy lives,” said Assoc Prof Yeoh.

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## **About the National University of Singapore (NUS)**

A leading global university centred in Asia, the National University of Singapore (NUS) is Singapore's flagship university, which offers a global approach to education and research, with a focus on Asian perspectives and expertise.

NUS has 17 faculties and schools across three campuses. Its transformative education includes a broad-based curriculum underscored by multi-disciplinary courses and cross-faculty enrichment. Over 38,000 students from 100 countries enrich the community with their diverse social and cultural perspectives. NUS also strives to create a supportive and innovative environment to promote creative enterprise within its community.

NUS takes an integrated and multi-disciplinary approach to research, working with partners from industry, government and academia, to address crucial and complex issues relevant to Asia and the world. Researchers in NUS' Schools and Faculties, 30 university-level research institutes and centres, and Research Centres of Excellence cover a wide range of themes including: energy, environmental and urban sustainability; treatment and prevention of diseases common among Asians; active ageing; advanced materials; risk management and resilience of financial systems. The University's latest research focus is to use data sciences, optimisation research and cybersecurity to support Singapore's Smart Nation initiative.

For more information on NUS, please visit [www.nus.edu.sg](http://www.nus.edu.sg).

## **About the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine**

Established in 1905, the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine is the first institution of higher learning in Singapore and the genesis of the National University of Singapore.

The School offers one of the finest undergraduate medical programmes in the Asia Pacific region and commands international recognition and respect. The Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2016 by subject and Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings by Subject 2017 list NUS Medicine as a leading medical school in Asia.

It admits 300 students to the MBBS degree programme annually and its principal missions are to educate and train the next generation of healthcare professionals, and foster research that will help to advance the practice of medicine.

The 18 NUS Medicine departments in the basic sciences and clinical specialties work closely with the Centre for Medical Education, the Centre for Biomedical Ethics, the Centre for Healthcare Simulation as well as the restructured public hospitals to ensure that teaching and research are aligned and relevant to Singapore's healthcare needs. The School is a founding institutional member of the National University Health System.

For more information about NUS Medicine, please visit <http://nusmedicine.nus.edu.sg>.