



PRESS RELEASE

4 MARCH 2016 | FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VIVA Foundation and NUS launches \$10 million cancer research centre for childhood leukaemia

Singapore, 4 March 2016 –The VIVA Foundation for Children with Cancer (VIVA) strengthens its partnership with the National University of Singapore Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (NUS Medicine) by bringing together donors, partners and contributors to fund a \$10 million research centre that will boost research for childhood acute leukaemias in Singapore.

Helmed by Associate Professor Allen Yeoh and Professor Dario Campana, both from the Department of Paediatrics, NUS Medicine, the new research facility seeks to improve cure rates and quality of life of children with leukaemia through more accurate disease classification, prediction and determination of treatment response. This will be done using cutting-edge laboratory techniques, as well as new and more effective tests.

In appreciation and recognition of VIVA's efforts and support, this new research facility set up at the NUS Medicine will be named VIVA-NUS Centre for Translational Research in Acute Leukaemia (CentRAL).

Said NUS President, Professor Tan Chorh Chuan, "The opening of the VIVA-NUS Centre for Translational Research in Acute Leukaemia today marks another milestone in our work to develop better and more effective treatments for leukaemia. I am immensely grateful for the support and active involvement of VIVA, in partnership with the Children's Cancer Foundation, the Tote Board and Singapore Turf Club as well as the Lee Foundation, which is a powerful testimony to the spirit of collaboration that has enabled us to make such strong progress in our common cause against this cancer."

Childhood acute leukaemias

The most common form of childhood cancers, paediatric acute leukaemia accounts for 40% of all cancers diagnosed in children in Singapore. Most children with leukaemia can be cured if adequately diagnosed and treated. To successfully treat the children, the intensity of therapy has to be aligned to the aggressiveness of the disease. Under-treatment could lead to life-threatening

relapses, while over-treatment could lead to future cancers or impairments that will affect a child's future quality of life.

"VIVA believes that cutting-edge research work and improved care is vital in not only saving children but also in minimising late-life effects due to early-life treatment. This way, more children will not only be able to overcome their cancer, but also go on to achieve the full potential of their lives. As a charity organisation, VIVA's work is made possible by donors, supporters and partners. Hence, we would like to thank the Children's Cancer Foundation, Lee Foundation, as well as the Tote Board and the Singapore Turf Club for contributing towards this key new project by VIVA and NUS," said Mrs Jennifer Yeo, Chairman of VIVA Foundation.

Translating research into improved care

VIVA-NUS CentRAL will focus on translational research in childhood acute leukaemias, in areas such as immunotherapy, said Associate Professor Allen Yeoh, who is also the medical director of the facility.

"Patients with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia on study will undergo comprehensive tests that will accurately stratify their risk of relapse so that appropriate doses of chemotherapy can be given. In addition, we will determine upfront if they can tolerate the normal doses of mercaptopurine which is a cornerstone drug for treatment of acute lymphoblastic leukaemia. Excitingly, through matching grants from the Tote Board and the Singapore Turf Club, young adults will also benefit from the programme. The National University Hospital, Singapore General Hospital and Tan Tock Seng Hospital will enrol young adults on a national protocol based on our successful treatment in children for the first time. "

Housed at the NUS Medicine's flagship building, the Centre for Translational Medicine, the VIVA-NUS CentRAL officially opens today.

For media enquiries, please contact:

Sharon Aw
Senior Assistant Manager
Communications Office
National University Health System
DID: (65) 6772 3987
Email: sharon_aw@nuhs.edu.sg

Sandra Leong
General Manager
VIVA Foundation for Children with Cancer
DID: (65) 6694 3370
Email: sandraleong@viva.sg

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 has three Research Centres of Excellence (RCE) and 26 university-level research institutes and centres. It is also a partner in Singapore's fifth RCE. NUS shares a close affiliation with 16 national-level research institutes and centres. Research activities are strategic and robust, and NUS is well-known for its research strengths in engineering, life sciences and biomedicine, social sciences and natural sciences. It also strives to create a supportive and innovative environment to promote creative enterprise within its community.

For more information on NUS, please visit 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 what would become 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 World University Subject Rankings 2015-2016 list NUS Medicine as Asia's leading medical school, while the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings by Subject 2015 placed NUS Medicine 21st globally.

The School admits 300 students to its medical undergraduate degree programme annually. Its principal missions are to educate and train the next generation of healthcare professionals, and foster research that will help to transform the practice of medicine. It also plays a pivotal role in producing future leaders in healthcare delivery, discovery and public service as well as in Singapore's Biomedical Sciences Initiative.

The School's 18 departments in the basic sciences and clinical specialties work closely with the Centre for Medical Education and the Centre for Biomedical Ethics to ensure that teaching and research are aligned and relevant to Singapore's healthcare needs.

For more information about the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, please visit <http://medicine.nus.edu.sg/corporate/>

About the VIVA Foundation for Children with Cancer (VIVA)

As a Singapore-based charity, the mission of VIVA Foundation is to save the lives of more children with cancer through research, medical care and education. Since its establishment in 2006, VIVA Foundation has been partnering with institutions and scientists to catalyse research, improve childhood cancer facilities, and increase the capabilities of doctors and nurses to help children with cancer.

VIVA Foundation focuses on research so that better treatments and cures are being developed at a quicker pace. VIVA also focuses on helping to improve medical care facilities and education for caregivers so more children with cancer are cared for by the best people in the best possible environment.