



PRESS RELEASE

Renowned ethicist to head NUS Centre for Biomedical Ethics

Singapore, 1 August 2022—One of the world's foremost scholars in the field of biomedical ethics has been appointed to head the Centre for Biomedical Ethics (CBmE) at the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (NUS Medicine).

Professor Julian Savulescu, currently the Uehiro Chair in Practical Ethics and Director of the Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics at the University of Oxford since 2002, brings immense expertise and deep scholarship in the discipline to NUS Medicine as the Chen Su Lan Centennial Professor. His initial three-year appointment as the Director of CBmE at NUS Medicine begins on 28 August 2022. Trained in medicine, neuroscience and bioethics, the Australian articulated the principle of procreative beneficence. His research interests span a range of topics in medical ethics, and include the ethics of genetics and other new or emerging technologies.

Prof Savulescu holds multiple research and teaching appointments in various institutions and is also a Co-Director of the Wellcome Trust Strategic Centre for Ethics and Humanities. He was a Wellcome Trust Senior Investigator on Responsibility and Health Care, as well as previously directing the Oxford Martin Programme for Collective Responsibility for Infectious Disease at the Oxford Martin School at the University of Oxford. He is also Distinguished International Visiting Professor in Law at the University of Melbourne, and Visiting Professorial Fellow at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute.

Human agency and freedom of choice is a leitmotif that underpins his work. Referring to a Wellcome Trust funded project on people's responsibility and healthcare in an interview for his alma mater, Monash University, in 2015, Prof Savulescu pointed to people's lifestyle choices being highly significant and increasing contributors to the global burden of disease. "As these disorders arise from people's choices, some ethicists argue that people should be held responsible for their ensuing need for treatment. Given that medical resources are scarce, the question arises as to whether priority should be given to those who are not responsible for their medical condition. We aim to answer this question. Doing so requires understanding the nature of moral responsibility. It also requires understanding how people make choices, and how these choices are influenced by the actions and choices of others, including people who attempt to promote healthy or unhealthy choices (from governments to advertisers)." He added, "It requires understanding the extent to which substances (such as alcohol and tobacco) that are addictive, but which cause significant health problems, affect the responsibility of people who ingest them, as well as discovering whether activities (like gambling) might also be

addictive. It also requires understanding how psychiatric disorders like ADHD and personality disorders affect responsibility. We will probe the extent to which it might be justifiable for governments to actively attempt to promote healthier behaviours—perhaps at some expense to individual responsibility—or alternatively, to actively promote individual responsibility.”

In 2018, the self-confessed avid skier and surfer concluded seven years as Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Medical Ethics, the highest impact journal in the field. He is founding editor of the Journal of Practical Ethics, an open access journal in Practical Ethics. He received an honorary doctorate from the University of Bucharest in 2014.

Professor Chong Yap Seng, Dean of NUS Medicine, and Lien Ying Chow Professor in Medicine, said, “With the rapid and continuing advances the world has made in genomics, precision medicine, big data, and artificial intelligence, we now have an unprecedented opportunity to drastically improve people’s lives with new health approaches and technologies. But to reap these benefits, the ethics of today must be updated. We must also address structural and social factors that increasingly contribute to disease, such as limitations of access and social disadvantage. Prof Savulescu’s cutting-edge work in practical ethics will help Singapore address many of these challenges.”

Prof Savulescu added, “The National University of Singapore is a great university of the present; it will be an even greater university of the future. My goal is to make ethics front and centre of that future. I aim to make the NUS Centre for Biomedical Ethics the leading centre in Asia and thus in the world. Ethics is important to every person and institution, every day. It is the basis of our humanity. I aim to provide the skills and training to people to identify and think more deeply about ethical issues for themselves.”

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About National University of Singapore (NUS)

The National University of Singapore (NUS) is Singapore's flagship university, which offers a global approach to education, research and entrepreneurship, with a focus on Asian perspectives and expertise. We have 16 colleges, faculties and schools across three campuses in Singapore, with more than 40,000 students from 100 countries enriching our vibrant and diverse campus community. We have also established our NUS Overseas Colleges programme in more than 15 cities around the world.

Our multidisciplinary and real-world approach to education, research and entrepreneurship enables us to work closely with industry, governments and academia to address crucial and complex issues relevant to Asia and the world. Researchers in our faculties, 30 university-level research institutes, research centres of excellence and corporate labs focus on themes that include energy; environmental and urban sustainability; treatment and prevention of diseases; active ageing; advanced materials; risk management and resilience of financial systems; Asian studies; and Smart Nation capabilities such as artificial intelligence, data science, operations research and cybersecurity.

For more information on NUS, please visit www.nus.edu.sg.

About the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (NUS Medicine)

The NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine is Singapore's first and largest medical school. Our enduring mission centres on nurturing highly competent, values-driven and inspired healthcare professionals to transform the practice of medicine and improve health around the world.

Through a dynamic and future-oriented five-year curriculum that is inter-disciplinary and inter-professional in nature, our students undergo a holistic learning experience that exposes them to multiple facets of healthcare and prepares them to become visionary leaders and compassionate doctors and nurses of tomorrow. Since the School's founding in 1905, more than 12,000 graduates have passed through our doors.

In our pursuit of health for all, our strategic research programmes focus on innovative, cutting-edge biomedical research with collaborators around the world to deliver high impact solutions to benefit human lives.

The School is the oldest institution of higher learning in the National University of Singapore and a founding institutional member of the National University Health System. It is one of Asia's leading medical schools and ranks among the best in the world (Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2022 by subject and the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings by subject 2022).

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