



Press Release

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A*STAR and NUS establish new Clinical Imaging Research Centre with Siemens as industry partner

A new Clinical Imaging Research Centre (CIRC) will be set up by the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR) and the National University of Singapore (NUS) to undertake clinical research and advanced biomedical imaging in humans using an extensive suite of state-of-the-art imaging tools from German technology powerhouse, Siemens Medical Solutions.

The centre will be one of the few clinical research sites in the world to use the MR-PET, an innovative advanced medical imaging solution being developed by Siemens. It will combine two powerful leading edge imaging techniques of 3-Tesla Magnetic Resonance Imaging (3T MRI) with Positron Emission Tomography (PET). The centre will start with the 3T MRI system, and subsequently the PET system will be introduced. 3T MRI provides detailed anatomical images and measures of physiological function while PET systems provide molecular details of cellular functions. By conducting both scans simultaneously with the MR-PET, clinical researchers would be able to define and locate diseases accurately while identifying underlying molecular causes. The ability to study disease pathways can be used for the development of new drugs and therapies.

Said Mr Lim Chuan Poh, Chairman of A*STAR, "The introduction of powerful clinical imaging research capabilities into Singapore will be a major boost to advancing clinical and translational research. A*STAR's joint venture with NUS and our partnership with Siemens will strengthen the connection between 'bench and bedside'. The research, capabilities and infrastructure at the Centre will accelerate the advancement of science, positively impact patient care and treatment, and create new opportunities for industry to collaborate with the public sector and tertiary institutions."

The CIRC will be a focus for development and validation of new imaging methods as well as enable the study of novel interventions in humans. The centre is dedicated to research and will focus on key disease areas of particular relevance to Singapore and the health of its population, such as cancer, neurodegenerative disorders and other diseases.

As part of the partnership, Siemens will set up a research foundation grant of US\$2.5 million over five years to support collaborative research in translational medicine at the CIRC.

CIRC will be led by Professor Sir George Radda, Chairman of the Singapore Bioimaging Consortium of A*STAR. Prof Radda will head a CIRC management committee comprising Professor John Wong, Dean of the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine and Vice President for Research/Life Sciences at NUS; Professor Judith Swain, Executive Director of the Singapore Institute of Clinical Sciences, A*STAR, and Dr Beh Swan Gin, Executive Director of the Biomedical Research Council, A*STAR.

The Management Committee is in the process of recruiting a Director to be jointly appointed by A*STAR and NUS to head CIRC. The Centre will also establish four medical teams each led by a principal investigator with a group of post-doctoral fellows and a highly specialised technical team.

CIRC will initially be based in the NUS Centre for Life Sciences Building located adjacent to A*STAR's Singapore Institute for Clinical Sciences and the National University Hospital. CIRC will eventually be housed in a new building at the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine. This strategic location will enable CIRC to capitalize on the rich clinical research milieu and to foster greater collaborative efforts with the universities, research institutes, hospitals, and specialty centers. The Centre will also work closely with the industry partners such as Siemens and others.

Professor John Wong said, "This strategic collaboration with A*STAR and Siemens is indeed a significant milestone for NUS and Singapore. As a comprehensive University with significant expertise and interest in the Life Sciences, developing novel ways to image the human body will mobilize talent across many Faculties and Schools, particularly in Engineering, Science, Medicine, Computer Science, and Dentistry. We will be working closely with the National University Hospital and NUS Enterprise to develop even more strategic relationships with research and industry partners to translate discoveries into medical applications that will benefit Singaporeans and the rest of the world."

Professor Radda said, "Clinical imaging capabilities and research is highly integrative and collaborative nature. We want to develop CIRC into a major clinical research imaging centre in Asia and a national resource for research and training in the R&D community. CIRC catalyses scientific and medical advances and stimulate industry growth by putting very powerful capabilities into the hands of biomedical and clinical investigators from both the private and public sector. Clinical imaging holds major potential benefit to patients."

"We are committed to transferring highly qualified personnel to Singapore's radio-biomarker discovery program," said Mr Michael Reitermann, President of Siemens Medical Solutions, Molecular Imaging division. "This is an important step towards Siemens' vision to expand and develop new

technologies to help ensure affordable personalized medicine is within reach of a wider population.”

The CIRC aims to undertake world-class research using state of the art imaging tools and technologies, provide a shared resource for research imaging across Singapore, and be a focal point for the development, testing and validation of new imaging methods, biomarkers and imaging agents for human studies. The multimodality and multidisciplinary research centre will have a focus on specific areas of biomedical research, including clinical trials, novel medical devices and validation work. It is designed and organized to support translational and clinical research by bringing together basic scientists and clinicians who are keen to study the impact of new therapies and devices in human patients. It also aims to be a major training centre for Masters and PhD students in clinical imaging.

“Siemens is honored to be a technology partner in this long-term collaboration,” said Mr. Hans-Dieter Bott, Country Manager of the Siemens Group of Companies in Singapore. “The government’s commitment and support of this public-private sector initiative to build an international center of excellence in biotechnology makes Singapore a great investment location for Siemens.”

“As part of our efforts to establish Singapore as the Asian thought leader in biomedical sciences research, EDB strongly promotes technology companies to form partnerships with the public research community in Singapore to leverage on the scientific excellence and capabilities that we have built here. The collaboration between NUS, A*STAR and Siemens is a very good example of a successful public private partnership.” said Mr Yeoh Keat Chuan, Executive Director, Biomedical Sciences Group, Economic Development Board.

“The Clinical Imaging Research Centre is a key scientific infrastructure that reinforces our translational research efforts, supporting clinical trials and the development of novel medicines and devices,” Mr Yeoh added.

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For media enquires, please contact:

A*STAR

Michelle Khor

Deputy Director, Corporate Communications
Agency for Science, Technology and Research

DID: (65) 6826 6339

Email: michelle_khor@a-star.edu.sg

Alice Khong

Senior Officer, Corporate Communications
Agency for Science, Technology and Research

DID: (65) 6826 6182

Email: alice_khong@a-star.edu.sg

EDB BMSG

Mr Sheo S. Rai

Head

Marketing Communications

EDB BMSG

DID: (65) 6395 7784

Email: sheo_shanker_rai@bmsg.gov.sg

NUS

Sarah Ng

Manager, Marketing & Communications

NUS Enterprise

National University of Singapore

DID: (65) 6516 1079

Email: sarah@nus.edu.sg

Siemens

Ng Siao Sze

Marketing Communications Manager

Siemens Medical Solutions

Asia Pacific Headquarters

DID: (65) 6490 8102

Email: siaosze.ng@siemens.com

Notes to the Editor:

About Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR)

www.a-star.edu.sg

The Agency for Science, Technology and Research, or A*STAR, is Singapore's lead agency for fostering world-class scientific research and talent for a vibrant knowledge-based Singapore.

A*STAR actively nurtures public sector research and development in Biomedical Sciences, Physical Sciences and Engineering, with a particular focus on fields essential to Singapore's manufacturing industry and new growth industries. It oversees 14 research institutes and supports extramural research with the universities, hospital research centres and other local and international partners.

At the heart of this knowledge intensive work is human capital. Top local and international scientific talent drive knowledge creation at A*STAR research institutes. The Agency also sends scholars for undergraduate, graduate and post-doctoral training in the best universities, a reflection of the high priority A*STAR places on nurturing the next generation of scientific talent.

About Singapore Bioimaging Consortium (SBIC)

www.sbic.a-star.edu.sg

The Singapore Bioimaging Consortium (SBIC) was established by the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR) in August 2004 to serve as a focal point for stimulating, funding, coordinating and reporting on the various bioimaging activities in Singapore. SBIC includes representations from the research institutes of both the Biomedical Research Council (BMRC), the Science and Engineering Research Council (SERC), as well as selected groups outside of A*STAR from universities, hospitals and disease centres. The Consortium is under the chairmanship of Professor Sir George Radda, Emeritus Professor of Molecular Cardiology,

University Laboratory of Physiology, Cardiac Science Centre, University of Oxford, UK. Sir George is a noted expert in magnetic resonance in medicine.

About NUS

www.nus.edu.sg

The National University of Singapore (NUS) is a multi-campus university of global standing, with distinctive strengths in education and research and an entrepreneurial dimension. A growing university, NUS now spans three locations - its principal 150-hectare Kent Ridge campus, Bukit Timah campus and Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School Singapore. It has an enrolment of 22,000 undergraduate and more than 9,000 graduate students from 80 countries.

NUS offers a broad-based curriculum underscored by multi-disciplinary courses and cross-faculty enrichment. There are 14 faculties offering courses from architecture to medicine to music. A special feature of NUS education is the global dimension of its courses in partnership with some of the world's best institutions. NUS also enjoys a close teaching-research association with 13 national-level, 11 university-level and 80 faculty-based research institutes and centres. Research activities are strategic and robust, and a 'no walls' collaborative culture forms the bedrock of NUS' research-intensive vibrancy. A spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation promotes creative enterprise university-wide. This is aided by a venture support eco-system that helps students, staff and alumni nurture the development of start-ups into regional and global companies.

NUS plays an active role in international academic networks such as the International Alliance of Research Universities (IARU) and Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU). It is ranked amongst the best universities in the world, and is well-regarded for disciplines such as Technology, Biomedicine and the Social Sciences.

About Siemens

www.siemens.com/medical

Siemens Medical Solutions of Siemens AG is one of the world's largest suppliers to the healthcare industry. The company is known for bringing together innovative medical technologies, healthcare information systems, management consulting, and support services, to help customers achieve tangible, sustainable, clinical and financial outcomes. Recent acquisitions in the area of in-vitro diagnostics – such as Diagnostic Products Corporation and Bayer Diagnostics – mark a significant milestone for Siemens as it becomes the first full service diagnostics company. Employing more than 41,000 people worldwide and operating in over 130 countries, Siemens Medical Solutions reported sales of 8.23 billion EUR, orders of 9.33 billion EUR and group profit of 1.06 billion EUR for fiscal 2006 (Sept. 30).