

PRESS RELEASE

LAUNCH OF MULTI-CENTRE LUNG CANCER RESEARCH PLATFORM A FIRST FOR ASIA

- Asian Thoracic Oncology Research Group (ATORG) to run multi-centre trials that will make a positive impact on the treatment of thoracic cancers in Asia
- Some upcoming studies include lung cancer registries and clinical trials for defined molecular subsets of lung cancer, as well as evaluation of treatment paradigms involving novel clinical endpoints and immuno-oncology drugs

Singapore, 15 August 2017 – The National Cancer Centre Singapore (NCCS), Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) and Seoul National University Hospital (SNUH) have jointly launched the Asian Thoracic Oncology Research Group (ATORG), a central coordination platform for multi-centre clinical trials and translational research for thoracic malignancies in Asia.

ATORG will establish a central coordination office based in Singapore to design cutting-edge clinical studies that leverage each institution's capabilities, and conduct proof-of-concept trials relevant to the treatment of thoracic cancers in the region. The agenda and clinical studies will be guided by a Scientific Committee comprising of representation from National Cancer Centre Singapore, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Seoul National University Hospital, National Taiwan University, National University Hospital Singapore, University of Sydney and Mahidol University, Bangkok.

“Lung cancer management paradigms have evolved considerably in the past few years, most notably with increased segmentation into defined patient subgroups for which certain targeted and immuno-therapy approaches are highly effective. ATORG will enable the conduct of next-generation clinical trials and forge new opportunities to pursue leading edge translational research, with the ultimate aim of improving health outcomes of patients in Asia.” said Dr Daniel Tan, Senior Consultant Medical Oncologist at NCCS, who also chairs the Executive Committee and serves on the Scientific Committee.

At its first meeting on 18 August 2017, the committee will discuss critical research areas including EGFR mutation positive and ALK re-arranged NSCLC, two of the commonest molecular subsets in Asia, as well as future directions for immune-oncology. A global key opinion leader in lung cancer, Professor Tony Mok, who is the Chairman of Department of Clinical Oncology CUHK, commented, “Many practice-changing studies in EGFR mutation positive NSCLC have been led out of Asia and China, given the benefit of high prevalence in this region. However, the emergence of resistance remains a major clinical challenge and this is why novel treatment paradigms, including new combinatorial approaches or high

precision diagnostic modalities, need to be explored to provide further options for patients. Building on this strong history, we are ready to engage novel research beyond the EGFR mutation.”

Because of its late presentation and aggressive nature, lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths among men and second highest among women in Singapore. NSCLC comprises approximately 80-90% of all lung cancers. With treatment, the median overall survival of advanced stage NSCLC is slightly above one year. However, with targeted treatment tailored to the genetic mutation, overall survival can reach approximately 2.5 years. Certain molecular subsets have, in fact, been shown to have better outcomes e.g. ALK and ROS1 re-arranged NSCLC, in part due to the availability of next generation targeted therapies, which have been successfully developed despite the rarity of these subsets (ROS1 and ALK occurs in about 1-2% and 4-6% of all NSCLC respectively).

Professor Dong-Wan Kim, Head of Cancer Clinical Trials Centre at SNUH said, “A major challenge we are trying to tackle is to improve the efficiency of trial enrolment for rare molecular subgroups. Working together as a collaborative group will potentially generate important clinical data for the region and extend the reach of these new targeted therapies to patients across Asia.”

Academic networks and pharmaceutical companies with a lung cancer study concept that they wish to bring to Asia are welcome to approach the ATORG committee or its trials office, which will provide scientific appraisal of the concept and advise the feasibility of running it.

For more information on potential research collaborations, please contact the lead clinical research coordinator, Ms Low Lishan at low.lishan@nccs.com.sg.

About National Cancer Centre Singapore

National Cancer Centre Singapore (NCCS) provides a holistic and multi-disciplinary approach to cancer treatment and patient care. We treat almost 70 per cent of the public sector oncology cases, and they are benefiting from the sub-specialisation of our clinical oncologists. NCCS is also accredited by the US-based Joint Commission International for its quality patient care and safety. To deliver among the best in cancer treatment and care, our clinicians work closely with our scientists who conduct robust cutting-edge clinical and translational research programmes which are internationally recognised. NCCS strives to be a global leading cancer centre, and shares its expertise and knowledge by offering training to local and overseas medical professionals. www.nccs.com.sg

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