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NTU Singapore wins S$2.8 M grant for antiviral drug research

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For the development of antiviral drugs for COVID-19 and future pandemics that could be taken in an outpatient setting



A team of scientists led by Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (LKCMedicine) at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore) have won a $2 million (S$2.8 million) competitive grant under a major research programme in the United States to develop drugs for viruses with the potential to cause pandemics, such as the Sars-CoV-2, dengue, and Zika viruses.

The research to be carried out by the NTU Singapore team is part of the efforts at the Midwest Antiviral Drug Discovery (AViDD) Center for Pathogens of Pandemic Concern based in the University of Minnesota, to develop antiviral drugs with a grant by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) in the US.

Led by NTU LKCMedicine's Associate Professor of Infection and Immunity and Provost's Chair in Medicine Luo Dahai, an expert in structural virology, the Singapore team will leverage NTU's state-of-the-art molecular and structural biology research platform and facility to identify new antiviral drug targets. Also on the research team is Dr Liew Chong Wai from the NTU Institute of Structural Biology.

The NTU team will be collaborating with the AViDD team led by eminent scientist Professor Reuben Harris to develop small molecule drug candidates, with an aim to bring the most promising drug candidates to the clinical research stage. Prof Harris is an investigator with the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and also Professor and Chair at the University of Texas Health San Antonio.