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New Biosafety Level 3 lab opens in Singapore for fight against future pandemics

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NTU Singapore launches new lab to bolster national fight against COVID-19 and future pandemics



To bolster Singapore's efforts to fight COVID-19 and prepare for the next big biological threat, the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (LKCMedicine) at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore) launched a new laboratory designed for research into pandemic viruses and deadly bacterial infections.

The new Biosafety Level 3 laboratory (BSL-3) hosted at the Experimental Medicine Building on NTU Singapore's Yunnan Campus will allow the safe handling of bacteria and viruses that are serious or lethal, such as those that cause COVID-19, tuberculosis, and Avian flu.

Biosafety Level 3 laboratories (BSL-3), like the one at NTU LKCMedicine, are gazetted as a protected place under the Ministry of Home Affairs and are regulated by the Ministry of Health (MOH), in accordance with the Biological Agents and Toxins Act (BATA) 2005.

At this facility, researchers will be able to safely process samples from infected patients to study the impact of the disease on the immune system, test for the pathogen's transmissibility, and develop vaccines and diagnostic tools – activities that can only be done in a highly contained environment due to the pathogen's infectious nature.

The facility will allow NTU LKCMedicine researchers to work closely with clinician- scientists at the National Healthcare Group and the National Centre for Infectious Diseases to respond more quickly and effectively in the fight against deadly pathogens and in the event of an infectious disease outbreak. It will be an important partner with a role to play in Singapore's Programme for Research in Epidemic Preparedness and Response (PREPARE), which pulls together pandemic research experts from various fields to respond to future infectious disease outbreaks.