

New centre for digestive health in Singapore to focus on early cancer detection

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Strengthening patient access to cutting-edge diagnostic technologies and innovations in early detection



The National University Hospital (NUH) in Singapore is embarking on a major initiative to establish the National University Centre for Digestive Health, slated for completion in the first half of 2025. With a vision to be the region's leading academic centre for digestive health, the Centre will pioneer research, innovations and clinical practices with an amplified focus to elevate the standards of early disease detection, precise diagnosis, treatment and prevention of digestive illnesses.

Through the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and advanced technology, the new Centre will serve as a comprehensive one-stop centre for gastroenterology and hepatology services, catering to the growing needs of patients with stomach, colon and liver-related diseases, including cancers.

Gastrointestinal cancers and liver cancer rank among the leading causes of cancer-related deaths in Singapore. It was reported by the Singapore Cancer Registry Annual Report 2021 that gastrointestinal cancers made up one-third of cancer cases in males and approximately one-fifth of the cases in females.

The Centre is currently the only one in Singapore to put in place three AI-enabled systems, known as the Computer-assisted detection (CADe), Computer-assisted diagnosis (CADx) and Computer-assisted quality control (CAQ), which work in tandem to not only identify early gastrointestinal lesions more effectively, but also enable the real-time cancer diagnosis of these lesions. This can translate to earlier treatments or follow-up interventions for patients identified with high-risk lesions, potentially leading to improved prognosis and treatment outcomes.