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ASIA EDITION

Singapore launches two new studies to improve cancer screening and early detection

May 15, 2026 | News

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The **Research Institute for Cancer Prevention, Screening and Early Detection (RISE)**, jointly led by the **National Cancer Centre Singapore (NCCS)** and **NTU Singapore**, has announced the launch of two studies; one led by NCCS to evaluate **multi-cancer early detection (MCED)** tests and another led by the **Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (LKCMedicine)** at NTU Singapore to develop targeted screening and prevention for metabolic dysfunction-linked cancers in Singapore.

MCED tests are an emerging cancer screening technology worldwide but there is limited evidence currently to show that they improve population health outcomes. The NCCS team will conduct a clinical trial to comprehensively evaluate the use of MCED tests to identify early-stage cancers in individuals with elevated risk due to pre-malignant conditions or hereditary cancer syndromes, and use the evidence-based insights to assess the feasibility for integration into cancer screening for at risk populations.

The LKCMedicine study focuses on individuals with metabolic risk factors, such as diabetes, excess body fat, high cholesterol or high blood pressure. These conditions increase the risk of developing several cancers, including colorectal, lung and breast cancer. Known as the **Cancer Risk Assessments and Early detection (CRAnE)** study, it aims to test multi-cancer risk assessment methods in primary care to tailor screening and prevention advice, so that individuals complete the screening tests most relevant to their risks.

MCED tests are currently not part of Singapore's national cancer screening programme due to limited evidence demonstrating their cost-effectiveness and benefit at a population level. While they hold potential, MCED tests are not a replacement for recommended cancer screening tests, including screening at population level using mammogram (for breast cancer), Pap smear and Human Papillomavirus Test (for cervical cancer), and Fecal Immunochemical Test and colonoscopy (for colorectal cancer).