

A*STAR, GSK join hands for lung cancer research

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Singapore: In a latest boost to A*STAR's collaborations with the industry, Dr Bing Lim, associate director, cancer stem cell biology; and senior group leader, genome institute of Singapore (GIS), was recently awarded a GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) grant under the Academic Center of Excellence (ACE) to further his research on lung cancer at the GIS.

This partnership between GIS and GSK will significantly advance both organizations' joint efforts towards finding a cure for the disease. The central goal of the grant awarded to GIS, worth \$285,925 (SGD\$350,000), is the identification of new diagnostic and therapeutic targets for cancer, and the initiation of a commit-to-target (C2T) milestone in GSK discovery. A three-pronged approach will be adopted in order to achieve this.

The first of the three-pronged approach is to fully validate the targets as candidates for discovery initiation, focusing on those that are amenable to bio-therapeutics. The second stage of the grant will focus on using high-throughput technologies to sequence lung cancer cells and identify unique and novel variant tumors markers, which could be used as diagnostic and therapeutic targets in cancers. The third stage involves the full characterization of monoclonal antibodies that have been generated by GIS against lung cancer cells that are highly enriched for cancer tumor initiating cells.

Dr Lim said that, "This collaboration with GSK provides a great opportunity for both parties to learn what the most effective way is for industry and academic research to join forces in the constantly changing landscape of scientific paradigm, biomedical technology and health care goals."

Professor N G Huck Hui, executive director, GIS, said that, "Professor Bing Lim's lab is doing cutting-edge research in lung

cancer initiating cells and the award of this ACE grant is a clear endorsement of the translational value of his research. This is an exemplar of how world class research done at the Biopolis is attracting industry interest and building strategic alliance."