

Taiwan foundation announces biotech awards

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Singapore: The Taiwan Bio-Development Foundation, a non-profit organization that focuses to develop the nation's biotechnology sector, recently announced this year biotechnology awards.

The award winners were- associate Professor Fan Shih-kang, National Taiwan University, Mr Lin Kuo-I, research fellow, Academia Sinica Genomics Research Center, Mr Patrick Hsieh, associate research fellow, Academia Sinica Institute of Biomedical Sciences and Mr Kuo Min-liang, dean, National Taiwan University College of Life Science.

Prof Shih-kang received the award for his work on whether microchips can imitate the function of human cells. If his research is successful, Prof Shih-kang said the chips could be used to test the effects of new drugs on people, sparing animals from being involved in the drug testing process.

Mr Kuo-I, won an award for his research into plasma cells, which produce antibodies. This work may lead to the development of new vaccines, he added. Mr Hsieh was recognized for his study of drugs aimed at driving stem cells to become heart muscle thus avoiding heart transplants.

Mr Min-liang was awarded for his study on malignant tumors and development of new therapeutics for cancer. The award winners will receive research grants of \$794,360 over a 10-year period.