

'Encouraging' numbers apply to 3rd med school

By **AMELIA TENG**

SINGAPORE'S third and newest medical school, which will commence classes in August, said response to its admission exercise has been "encouraging".

The Lee Kong Chian (LKC) School of Medicine – jointly run by the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and Imperial College London – will take in 54 for its first cohort. Applications are open till the end of this month, after which around 400 shortlisted candidates must attend an interview.

Professor Dermot Kelleher, dean of the new medical school who met Singapore's media for the first time yesterday, did not specify how many applications it got.

But the surge in the

number of candidates here who sat the BioMedical Admissions Test (BMAT) offered some indication.

The test is a prerequisite for those applying to the LKC School of Medicine and British universities. The other two medical schools here – the National University of Singapore's Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine and the Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School – do not require applicants to take this test.

Last year, nearly 1,000 took the BMAT, compared with 150 to 200 previously. The bulk of them – 832 – indicated that they may apply to the new medical school.

"We are delighted that more than 800 students in Singapore who sat the BMAT last year indicated their interest in applying to LKC medi-

cine, and early indications are that these are translating into actual applications," said an NTU spokesman.

Yesterday, Prof Kelleher, who is also principal of Imperial College's medical faculty, gave more details about the school's curriculum, emphasising the need to update the way medicine is taught.

"The days when medical education was delivered through a static formula are gone," said the Irish immunology and infectious disease expert, adding it is crucial to keep up with emerging therapies and technologies.

To help students learn bedside manners and empathy, they will interact with patients as early as two months into the first year. They will work in groups of six, and e-learning tools like iPads



Professor Dermot Kelleher, dean of the new medical school, said medical teaching needs updating.

will be an integral feature.

Prof Kelleher said he also hopes to see more becoming clinician scientists – doctors who do research on top of treating patients. "That is what drives real scientific discovery in medicine," he said.

✉ ateng@sph.com.sg