

[« Return to article](#)[Print this](#)

The Straits Times

www.straitstimes.com

Published on Oct 24, 2014

President Tony Tan at signing of healthcare technology tie-up between NTU and Bristol University

By Charissa Yong

LONDON - Clothes that can monitor the health status of seniors in their homes may be the future of healthcare - and it is a future that Singapore and Britain's universities are exploring together.

A tie-up between Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and the University of Bristol aims to research and develop healthcare technology which uses smart sensors and which a person can wear.

President Tony Tan Keng Yam, who is in Britain on a State Visit, witnessed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding to formalise the joint venture on Thursday at the University of Bristol.

The partnership comes amid a push for both countries to further collaborate in scientific research, which President Tan called for in various comments made here this week, including at the Royal Society, Britain's top science institution.

In Bristol, Dr Tan also launched a competition that challenges teams of scientists, medics, engineers and designers to design healthcare technology that can be worn.

For instance, a wristband may automatically detect and track its wearer's movements, and can alert others if he falls or faints.

Said NTU president Bertil Andersson at the competition's launch: "Population ageing has become a big challenge in many countries. In Singapore, about one in eight residents is over 65, and this ratio is increasing rapidly."

Britain's Minister of State for Universities, Science and Cities, Mr Greg Clark, who attended the launch, noted the links between Singapore and the United Kingdom in the field of higher education.

Over 6,000 Singaporeans were students in Britain last year and over 55 universities have partnerships with Singapore, he said.

After the launch, Dr Tan, a former education minister, met 80 Singaporean students studying at the University of Bristol.

Bristol University's partnership with the NTU was one of several between Singaporean and British institutions announced over the course of Dr Tan's state visit.

While in Bristol, he also dropped by the studio of Aardman Animations, the company behind stop-motion films such as the Wallace and Gromit and Shaun the Sheep series.

Aardman and the British Council are teaming up to teach English to young children in Singapore, using Aardman's characters Shaun and Timmy. Both are sheep and star in their own television shows.

A learning centre, which will be ready in 2015, will have classrooms and resources like activity books with themes based on the shows.

charyong@sph.com.sg

Copyright © 2014 Singapore Press Holdings. All rights reserved.