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New lung disease research initiative to focus on Asian patients



The Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine has launched a new research initiative that will focus on understanding lung disease in Asian patients. PHOTO: NTU

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SINGAPORE - The Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine has launched a new research initiative that will focus on understanding lung disease in Asian patients.

The Academic Respiratory Initiative for Pulmonary Health will involve scientists from both local and international institutions.

The school is part of Nanyang Technological University.

"Lung diseases, we now know, affect patients of different ethnicities differently," said Professor Lionel Lee, executive vice-dean of the school. "And yet... in Asia, treatment guidelines and recommendations are largely based on evidence from Caucasian cohort studies."

The new initiative was launched on Monday (March 19), at the International Symposium on Respiratory Research. It will focus on a variety of lung diseases, ranging from asthma to chronic pulmonary obstructive disease (COPD).

Almost 6 per cent of adults above 40 have COPD, according to associate professor Benjamin Ong, who is Director of Medical Services at the Health Ministry. In addition, one in five children and one in 20 adults have asthma.

Prof Ong added that research is important to help doctors better treat patients with such diseases.

"Research and innovation can potentially discover better ways to maintain healthy lungs and prevent disease," he said. "It helps us to understand the pathophysiology of the disease itself, evaluate existing treatments in different patient groups, and optimise service delivery."

Prof Lee added: "Each breath we breathe in is a privilege. Through research, I believe that we can help to make each breath cleaner and more meaningful."