Plastinated human specimens ‘durable, safe and non-toxic’

BY ZARA ZHUANG - 15 HOURS 10 MIN AGO

SINGAPORE — Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (LKCMedicine), the new medical school of Nanyang Technological University (NTU), will be pioneering the use of plastinated bodies for medical education in Singapore.

These plastinated bodies will feature in anatomy classes taught at LKCMedicine, and will be ready for the first batch of
54 medical students this August.

LKCMedicine had ordered the human bodies and specimens from Germany, where they were prepared by the company behind the Body Worlds exhibition. The plastinated bodies arrived in Singapore earlier this year. There are two whole bodies and various body parts such as hearts, lungs, brains, limbs and torsos.

Plastinated bodies are human bodies that people pledge towards learning and the advancement of science upon their death and are preserved through plastination, a technique that involves replacing the fat and water in body tissues with plastic.

Medical schools that use plastinated specimens include Warwick University in the United Kingdom and New York University in the United States.

With plastinated specimens in their classrooms, LKCMedicine will no longer need traditionally preserved cadavers, which are in short supply in Singapore.

Assistant Professor Dinesh Kumar Srinivasan, the Lead for Anatomy Teaching at LKCMedicine, said: “These highly detailed plastinated human specimens are very durable: They can be handled repeatedly by students without deterioration and can be stored just like any inert object.”

“They may be used in a much broader range of educational settings, since we no longer have to take extra steps to re-preserve the body in embalming chemicals as we would need to for traditional cadavers each time they are used in class,” Prof Srinivasan said.