

## THE STRAITS TIMES

# NTU gets \$15 million for medical school to boost AI research to help patients



(From left) NTU chief development officer See E'jin; LKCMedicine chair Chan Lai Fung; NTU president Ho Teck Hua; businessman Sim Hoay Cheek and his wife Goh Swoon Keow; LKCMedicine dean Joseph Sung and LKCMedicine chief operating officer Serene Ng. ST PHOTO: ARIFFIN JAMAR

**Zhaki Abdullah**

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SINGAPORE – Nanyang Technological University has received a \$15 million injection to boost its research into the use of artificial intelligence in medicine, which will be led by its Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (LKCMedicine).

The donation will also go towards research on using technology to care for patients in hospitals and at home, with the aim of allowing LKCMedicine to deliver better

healthcare outcomes and develop meaningful medical innovations for patients.

Named for the late businessman and philanthropist Lee Kong Chian, LKCMedicine was established in 2010 as Singapore's third medical school.

The endowed gift was provided by the Sim Foundation, a private family foundation established by Singaporean businessman Sim Hoay Cheok in 2018 to involve his family in philanthropy.

An endowed gift is one where the principal sum is preserved and invested to earn returns to support the purposes of the donation.

The endowed donation will begin with an initial \$5 million in 2025, and continue over the next decade.

"Supporting education and healthcare has always meant a lot to me, and I am glad this contribution will help advance medical science and make everyday life better for others," said Mr Sim, who got his start in a car spare parts business inherited from his father.

"I have been fortunate along the way, and now I am in a position to give back. I hope this encourages others to find their own ways, big or small, to make a difference," he added, noting that he himself did not have the chance to attend university.

In 2013, the Sim family gifted an endowment fund to NTU to start the Sim Yung Chong TCM Scholarship.

Named for Mr Sim's father, the scholarship aims to help promising, financially challenged third-year students pursue a double degree programme in biomedical sciences and Chinese medicine at the NTU School of Biological Sciences.

And in 2018, the Sim Foundation established the Sim Yung Chong Medical Scholarship for medical undergraduates at LKCMedicine.

To date, more than 30 NTU students have benefited from the foundation's scholarships.

The endowed gift will also go towards further integrating intercultural and international elements into medical education at LKCMedicine, NTU said.

"It will augment the variety of overseas opportunities currently provided to medical students, such as a six-week overseas elective in Year 5, scholarly projects in Year 4,

overseas community involvement projects or international research competitions,” the university said in a statement.

To recognise the foundation’s generosity, the medical library at LKCMedicine’s Novena campus was named the Sim Hoay Cheok – Sim Foundation Library.

A ceremony was held on May 15 to mark the naming of the library, with LKCMedicine dean Joseph Sung noting that the date was especially meaningful as it was Mr Sim’s 80th birthday.

“What Mr Sim and his family did really touches my heart, because they have done their very best to support education, to train future doctors and to support the university’s research and education,” said Professor Sung.

NTU president Ho Teck Hua said the university “deeply appreciates the longstanding support” offered by Mr Sim and the Sim Foundation.

“This gift will undoubtedly help the university nurture future-ready doctors and advance healthcare innovations that will benefit people in Singapore and around the world,” said Professor Ho.

- Zhaki Abdullah is a correspondent at The Straits Times. He is on the health beat, in addition to occasionally covering science, environmental, tech and Muslim affairs issues.

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