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Singapore to boost liver cancer treatment

May 2, 2018 | News

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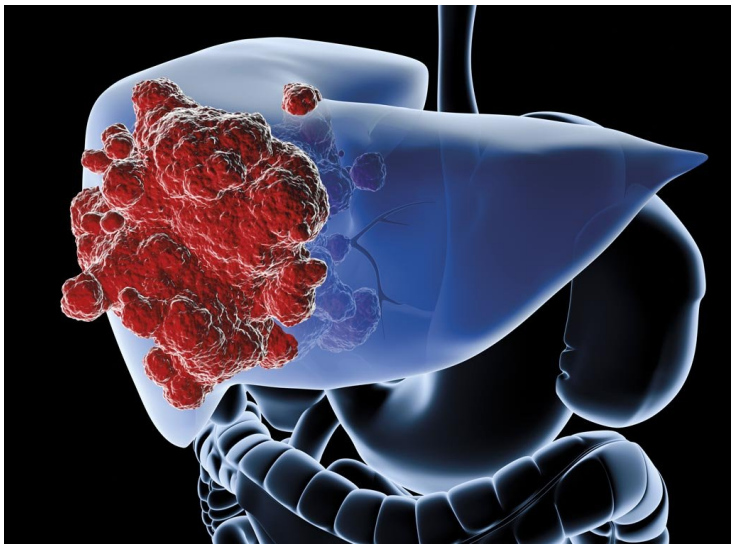

Purpose Programme's Joint Laboratory at Biopolis, Singapore has been launched to improve the treatment of liver cancer. It is billed as the world's first patient-specific platform for liver cancer to predict which drugs may work for individual patients.

The programme is a collaboration between the Agency for Science, Technology and Research's Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology, the Genome Institute of Singapore, the National Cancer Centre Singapore (NCCS), the National University of Singapore (NUS) and Samsung Medical Centre.

Under the new programme, tumour samples will be taken from a patient, and the cells tested against different drugs to see which works best for a patient. To narrow down the range of drugs tested, analysis of a patient's genetic make-up is also conducted.

The programme will use Samsung Medical Centre's robotic Avatar Platform, which allows hundreds of sets of cells to be screened at the same time, unlike current research processes here which are more laborious and time-consuming - only one set of cells can be screened at a time. The most suitable drugs can be identified in three to four weeks.

The service is expected to benefit patients at all stages of liver cancer. Post-surgery patients could turn to this for subsequent therapy to prevent relapses.