

Singapore institutes collaborate with ROK to develop innovative drugs

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This multi-institutional effort draws upon deep capabilities in skin research and cancer biology from Singapore and the Republic of Korea.



Singapore – Scientists and clinicians from Singapore institutes are collaborating with C&C Research Laboratories, a leading research institute from the Republic of Korea (ROK), to develop innovative drugs. The collaboration aims to address diseases of significant clinical burden, namely inflammatory skin disorders and major cancers including colorectal and liver cancers, through R&D in areas such as cancer stem cell research.

C&C Research Laboratories was established by JW Pharmaceutical from the Republic of Korea and Chugai Pharmaceutical (a member of Roche group) in Japan. The company specialises in the development of novel therapeutics for many indications such as arrhythmia, inflammation, oncology and metabolic diseases.

In Singapore, this multi-party effort involves A*STAR's Skin Research Institute of Singapore (SRIS), Institute of Medical Biology (IMB), Genome Institute of Singapore (GIS), Singapore Immunology Network (SIgN), and, together with the National Skin Centre (NSC).

This partnership is the latest between A*STAR and Korean companies and institutions and is focused on two areas: inflammatory skin disorders and drug-resistant cancers.

This collaboration between Singapore and ROK will use unique *in vitro* and animal models of atopic dermatitis, robust cancer organoid models, expertise in skin and cancer biology and state-of-the art equipment from A*STAR, together with clinical expertise and well-characterised cohorts of patients with skin disorders from NSC, to investigate and develop a collection of small molecule modulators from C&C Research Laboratories. The collaboration will evaluate the therapeutic potential of the small molecule modulators for the treatment of inflammatory skin diseases and a variety of cancers, and delineate their mechanisms of action. The aim is to identify novel biomarkers for patient identification and stratification, and develop innovative therapeutics that will transform the ways these diseases are treated.

“This partnership with C&C is yet another example of how researchers and companies from Singapore and Korea can come

together in a complementary way, to develop new drugs to address important medical problems. The focus on skin diseases is particularly strategic, as this represents a great unmet medical need for which there has been little innovation over the past decade. We plan to make a difference very quickly,” said Dr Benjamin Seet, Executive Director of A*STAR’s Biomedical Research Council.