WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY

World No Tobacco Day is observed around the world every year on 31 May. 

Darvin Raj: Hopeful for a Brighter Future

International Childhood Cancer Day

Sources of Protein
PROMISING RESEARCHERS RECEIVE GRANTS FROM MAKNA

Three local talented researchers with the **MOST PROMISING PROJECTS** received a total of **RM90,000** at the **MAKNA Cancer Research Award 2009** to fund their individual projects in cancer.

The trio, selected from more than 30 applications were Dr. Abhimanyu Veerakumarasivam (Mr), 30, Associate Prof Dr. Chong Pei Pei (Ms), 38 and Chuah Lay Hong (Ms), 24. The former two recipients are currently attached to the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UniPutra) as lecturers while the Chuah is currently pursuing her doctorate in Pharmacy at University of Nottingham (Malaysia). Each of the researchers received **RM30,000** at the event. The event was held and hosted by UniPutra at Serdang on 28 March 2001.

The Vetting Committee for the award consisting of five members was headed by Prof. Emeritus Dr. Cheong Soon Keng, Department of Hematology (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Medical Centre) since its inception in 2001. For this award, the recipients were reviewed and selected based on the degree of relevance their research with the objective of the award and how promising it would be in terms of benefitting the scientific and medical community and the possibility of discovering a breakthrough in cancer research.

Every recipient is also required to complete his or her project within two years and that it must be performed in Malaysia. Researchers are also required to submit a progress report every three months and to also present their findings in an appropriate forum in Malaysia within a year.
From 2001 to 2009, MAKNA allocated RM875,000 towards Cancer Research Award and last year, RM150,000 was awarded to five recipients. To-date, the program has funded 30 researchers in total.

At the ceremony, President and CEO of MAKNA, Dato' Mohd Farid Ariffin said that research was one of the various disciplines that MAKNA had set its sight on as its long-term goals. Besides operating a cancer ward, providing treatment, financial assistance, counselling, support, research is just as important as the others as it is aligned to the organisation’s corporate mission and objectives.

We cannot emphasise enough that our responsibility extends far beyond the everyday liaison and contact with patients under our care; whatever else we can do in making their lives better, including the promise of a cure is good enough for us to persevering for a positive outcome, said Dato' Farid.

"These researchers, very much like the ones before them who were awarded grants are a special breed of people as they could have chosen to research on something else but instead focused in cancer. I am sure they must have done a lot of "homework" or have embarked on such complex and difficult challenges and analyses".

In his speech, Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation, UniPutra Prof. Dato' Dr. Abu Bakar Salleh said the Institute of Bioscience was set up for the specific purpose and function as the launching platform of research initiatives. In 2005, it began to house an additional laboratory facility that saw the start of the collaboration between MAKNA and UniPutra for cancer research.

As a result, several breakthroughs have been achieved including "Development of Broad Spectrum Cancer Vaccines, using New Castle Disease Virus as Anti-Cancer Agent", spearheaded by Prof. Datuk Paduka Dr. Aini Ideris, the current Deputy Vice Chancellor for International and Academics Affairs of UniPutra, or projects which can potentially spur a wider range of activities such as the anticancer effects of Zerumbone from Zingiber Zerumet on human cervical cancer cells, jointly led by Dr. Ahmad Bustamam Abdul and Prof. Madya Dr. Sabariah Abdul Rahman, both of UniPutra.

“All these research initiatives have huge potentials in helping cancer patients, not just here in Malaysia but also throughout the world. The mechanism created within the Innovation and Research Department is designed specifically to enable young researchers to pursue their dreams to the fullest, from the conception to consumption,” he continued.

Present at the ceremony were Datuk Paduka Prof. Dr. Khatijah bt Mohd Yusoff, Deputy Secretary General (Science), Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI), Prof. Dato' Dr Abu Bakar Salleh, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Dr. Shukri Ab Wahab, Executive Director, Academy of Sciences, Malaysia Prof. Dr. Azhar Md. Zain, Dean, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Universiti Putra Malaysia.