

A Minute with Prof Wong Tien Yin

Research Leadership in SingHealth Duke-NUS AMC



Prof Wong Tien Yin,
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Q1) Which aspects of SingHealth and Duke-NUS partnership do you think we have done well?

Prof Wong: We have done very well in the partnership over a relatively short time (10–15 years). The aspects that have clearly stood out are our shared vision and mission; shared success in Academic Medicine (AM) outcomes; and closely aligned joint AM leadership (GCEO/Dean and other senior leadership positions). We also have a governance structure to oversee the formation of joint entities and programmes, namely, Academic Medicine Executive Committee (AM EXCO) which played a critical role to drive the formation of Academic Clinical Programmes (ACPs) and Joint Research Institutes (JRIs) etc. Importantly, this structure will provide the foundation for the future leadership team.

Today, we have also grown a robust pipeline of young academic talents across many ACPs; and a culture that is proud of and accepting of research, education and innovation as part of our Academic Medicine Centre's (AMC) growth. These are amazing achievements that we should be proud of.

Q2) Are there areas that we could have done better?

Prof Wong: Yes, of course. We can always aspire to do better! As the AMC becomes larger and more complex, with multiple hospitals joining the SingHealth clusters, there are new silos between ACPs and Signature Research Programmes (SRPs), and we need to continue to ensure clinicians and scientists across the different domains have a forum to network and exchange ideas. COVID-19 has not helped obviously. Then there continues to be a range of complicated admin, information technology (IT), financial and legal issues between SingHealth and Duke-NUS (and NUS) that are challenging to address, despite the best intentions of all parties. There are also real and perceived differences between being an academic faculty in the SRP and a faculty in an ACP (e.g., access to and supervision of PhD students, start-up funding etc.), which we are making good progress in bridging the gaps.

More importantly, the AMC needs to look outwards and globally. We cannot afford to be complacent. Regional and international competition will increase. We need to be financially sustainable for our AM goals, and constantly ask ourselves about the quality of our future talent pipeline: are we attracting the best students, the top residents, and the most outstanding clinicians and clinician scientists?

Q3) What are your dreams for the future of research in Singapore?

Prof Wong: My dream is that research continues to thrive and grow! Research and innovation are now key drivers for Singapore and our AMC. We have to be aligned and adapt to future trends such as digital technology, big data, artificial intelligence (AI), and related technology.

Singapore is well placed to see translation of research and innovation into clinical care, and hopefully, not just for us, but also to bring our products and best practices abroad to create an impact on the neighbouring countries through international collaboration opportunities. With research as one of the “three core” missions of our AMC, the future of research is very bright!

We are honoured to interview Prof Wong and share his message with our research community in commemoration of AMRI's 10th Anniversary. For more commemorative content or to learn more about AMRI, please visit <https://www.singhealthdukenus.com.sg/research>