PRESS RELEASE

NATIONAL CANCER CENTRE SINGAPORE AND IMMUNOSCAPE ENTER PARTNERSHIP TO IMPROVE CANCER TREATMENTS

- The two organisations will partner in joint R&D projects to further understand immune responses to cancers
- Predictive biomarkers are needed to identify and treat patients who are likely to respond to immunotherapy, so as to help contain high treatment costs and avoid potential toxicities associate with the treatments
- Several projects in prostate, head and neck, lung and urogenital cancers are already in discussion

Singapore, 6th November 2017 – National Cancer Centre Singapore (NCCS) and immunoSCAPE have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to enter joint research and development efforts to enhance current cancer therapies and search for novel therapeutic combinations.

The two organisations will leverage their complementary capabilities for joint R&D projects aimed at understanding the immune response induced by various cancer treatments, such as chemotherapy, radiotherapy and immunotherapy. This will help them design more effective and synergistic cancer treatment combinations with sustained efficacy.

NCCS has been committed to excellence in research, education and clinical services, and patient care. NCCS aims to provide the best care to patients through a multidisciplinary and holistic approach to cancer treatment. immunoSCAPE is a biotechnology company with cutting-edge technologies for mapping immune responses against tumour cells and pathogens. immunoSCAPE employs unique mass cytometry methods to measure changes in immune cells for biomarker and target identification.

Cancer is the leading cause of death in Singapore, affecting one in every four individuals. It is therefore of utmost importance and urgency to further improve current cancer treatments and to search for cures. Activating the patients’ immune response against cancer through immunotherapy strategies has led to early spectacular successes in several indications and yield much promise for the fight against cancer.
Advantages of immunotherapy over classical chemotherapy drugs include fewer side effects and potentially long-term, or even life-long, protection. However, predictive biomarkers are needed to identify and then treat only those patients who are likely to respond to immunotherapy. Such targeted approaches will help to contain the high treatment costs and avoid potential toxicities associated with the treatments. Also, much sought after in the field are meaningful measures to help doctors prioritise among many possible new combination treatments.

Under the MOU, NCCS and immunoSCAPE will undertake joint R&D projects, apply for joint funding, exchange scientific and technological information, and improve translational medicine efforts via cutting-edge immune-monitoring. Several projects in prostate, head and neck, lung and urogenital cancers are already in discussion.

For instance, Dr Melvin Chua, a Consultant Radiation Oncologist at NCCS, will work with immunoSCAPE to examine if radiotherapy triggers the patients’ immune responses to fight cancer, in addition to directly killing cancer cells. This finding will be important because about half of the cancer cases in NCCS require radiotherapy, and it may pave the ground to successful combination of radiotherapy with immunotherapy. In another project, Dr Daniel Tan, a Senior Consultant Medical Oncologist at NCCS, will explore with immunoSCAPE which biomarkers are relevant to predict outcome in patients treated with novel immunotherapies, moving precision medicine to a new level.

Mr Ng Choon-Peng, CEO immunoSCAPE, noted, “This key private-public partnership will leverage the synergistic analytical and clinical capabilities of our two organisations. I am confident that NCCS and immunoSCAPE joint activities will strengthen international recognition for Singapore as a hub for developing innovative solutions to meet that needs of cancer patients globally.”

Professor Soo Khee Chee, Executive Director of NCCS, said, “In NCCS, we are actively seeking collaborations and co-management programmes with like-minded organisations and individuals. We are excited to build this strong partnership with immunoSCAPE to conduct joint R&D projects to understand cancers and immune responses to cancers more deeply, and to strive towards developing more effective treatments, and ultimately cures for cancers. Through working together, we can make a difference in improving the health of our patients, who are at the heart of all that we do.”

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About National Cancer Centre Singapore
National Cancer Centre Singapore (NCCS) provides a holistic and multi-disciplinary approach to cancer treatment and patient care. We treat almost 70 per cent of the public sector oncology cases, and they are benefiting from the sub-specialisation of our clinical oncologists. NCCS is also accredited by the US-based Joint Commission International for its quality patient care and safety. To deliver among the best in cancer treatment and care, our clinicians work closely with
our scientists who conduct robust cutting-edge clinical and translational research programmes which are internationally recognised. NCCS strives to be a global leading cancer centre, and shares its expertise and knowledge by offering training to local and overseas medical professionals. www.nccs.com.sg

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About immunoSCAPE
immunoSCAPE is a biotechnology company leveraging a unique high-dimensional immune profiling platform to improve immunotherapy strategies. A spin-off from the laboratory of Dr Evan Newell at Singapore Immunology Network, A*STAR, immunoSCAPE employs cutting-edge technologies and mass cytometry to measure alterations of immune cells and T cell specificity for biomarker and target identification. immunoSCAPE offers services to drug development companies looking to optimize their pipeline in oncology, infectious and autoimmune diseases. For more information, please visit: www.immunoscape.com.

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