

World

NTU and top universities collaborate to launch International Consortium for Communication in Healthcare

■ The International Symposium on Health Care Communication 2020 will be hosted by Hong Kong University.

By *Bhaswati Guha Majumder*

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International Consortium for Communication in Health Care (Australian National University website)

Singapore's Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Australian National University (ANU) and University of Hong Kong joined their hands last week in the Lion City to launch the International Consortium for Communication in Healthcare, with an aim to encourage world-class research, education and practice in the healthcare sector.

The launch of the collaboration was the part of a two-day long Symposium, organized by the School of Humanities and Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, NTU in coordination with ANU Institute for Communication in Health Care. The Symposium concluded at the Australian High Commissioner's Residence, where the recent collaboration between these institutions was celebrated.

Professor Diana Slade, the Director of the Institute for Communication in Health Care and Professor Imogen Mitchell, Dean of Medicine from ANU joined other healthcare professionals, clinicians, linguists, communication scholars, educators and researchers from all around the world to share their ideas, experiences, knowledge and research findings.

Professor James Best, Dean of Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, NTU, Professor Joseph Liow, Dean of the College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, NTU and Professor Kang Kwong Luke, Chair of the School of Humanities NTU were present at the opening of the

Consortium in Singapore.



International Consortium for Communication in Health Care: (Australian National University website)

The Consortium was officially launched by two professors from ANU, Diana Slade and Imogen Mitchell, as well as Dr Elizabeth Rider, Harvard Medical School, Associate Professor Olga Zayts, The University of Hong Kong, Professor Naomi Low-Bear, Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, NTU, Professor Kang Kwong Luke, School of Humanities, NTU and Professor May O. Lwin, Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, NTU.

Prof Diana from ANU discussed the challenges in translating communication research to make a difference in hospital practices during the first day of Consortium's launch. While talking about a hospital case study, she said that the problems in healthcare communication include, "safety slippages that are exposed but not resolved in the nurse-nurse interaction", as well as the "lack of patient involvement/agency".

In addition, she also stated that "how healthcare professionals communicate with us, and us with them, impacts on health care outcomes of patients".

She also presented research, which was co-written by Dr Suzanne Eggins on communication with elderly patients as they are being discharged from the hospital. During the presentation Prof Slade said that "poor communication at discharge has been linked to preventable unplanned readmissions" and it has been linked to "frequent problems with continuity of medication management", with many patients reporting after discharge that they are not clear about their diagnosis, what they were treated for in hospital and what they should do to manage their health in future.

However, Prof Slade clarified that the aim of the discharge communication project was to identify the risk factors related to "readmissions and barriers to successful transitions of care for high-risk patient groups."

She also added that the aim is also to "apply these findings to provide effective, measurable and cost-efficient protocols to improve discharge transition outcomes for patients, carers and health service providers".

The International Symposium on Health Care Communication and launch of the Institute for Communication in Health Care (ICH) was hosted by ANU in Canberra in 2018 that also involved international leaders in the field of healthcare communication.

In 2020, the International Symposium on Health Care Communication will take place in Hong Kong, where the hosts will be the third member of the Consortium, Hong Kong University.