

Genomics and big data in health and disease highlighted at Health Research Symposium 2019 (with photos)

The Government is committed to building a healthy society, and health and medical research plays a crucial role by informing health policies with the latest knowledge and developments in the field, the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, said today (June 12) at the Health Research Symposium 2019.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the symposium, she said, "Genomics and use of big data are inter-related and cover nearly every aspect of medical and health research including communicable and non-communicable diseases. Research on genomics and big data fully supports the Government's stated priority areas in advancing health and medical research in the coming years."

Professor Chan noted that the Food and Health Bureau (FHB)'s Health and Medical Research Fund (HMRF) provides funding avenues to promote research as an engine for generating new knowledge and underscore the Government's commitment to applying scientific evidence to protect the health of the population.

Organised by the FHB, the symposium, entitled "Genomics and Big Data in Health and Disease", was attended by some 500 medical and healthcare practitioners, academics, researchers and representatives from the community and the Government.

Two renowned international experts from the United States, Professor Euan Ashley and Dr Nicholas Tatonetti, and three local distinguished leaders in the fields, Professor Leung Suet-yi, Ms Eva Tsui and Dr Anderson Tsang, delivered keynote lectures on genomics and big data in health and exchanged views with the audience at the symposium.

In the morning session of the symposium, Professor Ashley spoke on the concept of precision medicine and highlighted some of the critical contributions made by clinical genomics to its origination and evolution. In the afternoon session, Dr Tatonetti addressed the audience on observational data for biomedical discovery.

In addition, 20 leading local project teams from a variety of health-related disciplines spoke on their experience and outcomes of their projects on health and health services, infectious diseases, advanced medical research and health promotion. Recipients of the Research Fellowship Scheme discussed their experience of training and how they have applied their new skills in the public healthcare setting.

Meanwhile, 119 projects funded by the HMRF which set a benchmark to foster evidence-based interventions to improve the health of the population were showcased in the poster exhibition.

At the Health Research Symposium, 10 special awards were presented to the following awardees in recognition of their outstanding contributions to health and medical research, as well as health promotion. They are:

Excellent Research Awards:

Professor Chien Wai-tong
Professor Richard Choy
Professor Jin Dong-yan
Professor Stephen Tsui
Professor Eliza Wong
Professor Vincent Wong

Excellent Health Promotion Project Awards:

Dr Derek Cheung
Dr Tang Hoi-yin

The Most Promising Young Researcher Awards:

Dr Jasper Chan
Dr Alexander Lau

