

Hospital Authority and HKSTP formally launch data platform to support scientific research for tech enterprises in Science Park (with photo)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) and the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation (HKSTP) announced today (March 28) that the Data Collaboration Lab at the Science Park is now officially open to eligible innovation and technology (I&T) enterprises in Science Park for applications to use HA clinical data for research and development purposes. The HA and the HKSTP will fully support the I&T companies in Science Park to enhance clinical research in Hong Kong for the benefit of patients.

The HA and the HKSTP signed a collaboration agreement in September last year to commence a pilot programme. This initiative has led to the first and, at present, only platform in Hong Kong that facilitates access to the HA's clinical data for purposes beyond academic research and development. The Science Park's two pioneering biotechnology enterprises have engaged in a trial of the HA's medical data. The feedback from these two companies has been overwhelmingly positive, with a high level of satisfaction reported concerning the content of data, the robustness of the technology platform, and the overall user experience. They have also acknowledged the considerable value of the data for research purposes.

The HA and the HKSTP will officially provide access to the data platform for all eligible research institutions in Science Park, mainly biotech and healthcare companies. They can access the HA's data platform, which contains anonymised data of around 200 000 patients from the HA database, via a remote connection at designated locations. The data includes patients' demographic characteristics, attendance records at hospitals or clinics, clinical diagnoses, procedures, medication and examination results, etc.

The HA's Senior Systems Manager, Mr Dennis Lee, said, "The further opening of the HA data platform is an important step in promoting the development of clinical research. It allows research institutions to fully explore the potential of the clinical data in Hong Kong, and investigate the possibilities of life science research in the future. The HA will fully collaborate with the Government's policy in promoting scientific research, rendering vigorous support to scientific research development and driving the potential use of healthcare data by more scientific research institutions, in order to enhance healthcare quality and benefits for patients."

The HKSTP's Head of Institute for Translational Research, Dr Grace Lau,

said, "Data plays a pivotal role in advancing innovation and technological development. We are immensely pleased to collaborate with the Hospital Authority to establish the HKSTP HA Data Collaboration Lab. This initiative is highly beneficial for innovative technology enterprises seeking to advance their research and development efforts, and it also promotes the translation of scientific research into tangible public benefits. We will continue to maintain close ties with the Government, industry, academia, and research institutions, providing the necessary support to foster the growth of the entire innovation and technology ecosystem."

The HA and the HKSTP have attached great importance to the safety of patient data and privacy, and there is a robust mechanism to protect the data. All personal identifiers have been completely removed. Science Park will ensure that institutions comply with the requirements of the HA when using the data, and that the data will only be used with authorisation. The data is contained in the HA, and cannot be downloaded, saved or printed by users.

The HKSTP has also established a Clinical Research Ethics Committee and a Data Governance Committee to ensure that when I&T enterprises utilise data, they comply with all matters related to data protection and privacy, as well as clinical research ethics. The HKSTP has embedded a series of stringent security measures to protect data security and privacy. The network is isolated from the Internet to prevent unauthorised access. In addition, there are onsite personnel, surveillance systems, and a dedicated room for exclusive access.

The HA and the HKSTP will continue to support the Government's policy to support and promote scientific research, and to support the research institutions so as to enhance the quality of scientific research in Hong Kong.

