

Novartis Malaysia extended the Molecular Diagnosis Program for aBC patients with PIK3CA Gene

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- *Novartis Molecular Diagnosis Program with Pantai Premier Pathology & Subang Jaya Medical Center has contributed to earlier diagnosis for aBC patients with PIK3CA gene*
- *Early detection is key to improving the prognosis for aBC patients, providing clarity on treatment pathways*

Petaling Jaya, April 20, 2023 – Novartis Malaysia extended their collaboration with key laboratories in Malaysia, Pantai Premier Pathology and Subang Jaya Medical Center (SJMC), – to embark on a mission to create the accessibility of PIK3CA testing, realizing the significant impact of early diagnosis and intervention on advanced breast cancer (aBC) patient's quality of life.

When diagnosed with a complex disease like aBC, patients are usually encouraged to get screened for mutations. However, these tests are generally expensive and create barriers to patient access. The co-sharing collaboration, Molecular Diagnosis Program, which started in 2020, reduced the patients' costs by about 53% for PIK3CA.

Building on this Molecular Diagnosis Program, Pantai Premier Pathology, in continuous partnership with Novartis Malaysia, launched PIK3CA Booster Campaign last year for HR+/HER2- aBC patients to test for PIK3CA mutation, at a further subsidized rate, up to 85%. Similarly, the PIK3CA Booster Campaign was initiated to make these tests more accessible and will continue to run for as long as these subsidized test kits are available.

Mohamed Elwakil, Country President for Novartis Malaysia, said:

“We are pleased to be able to extend our partnership with Pantai Premier Pathology on this campaign as we believe that although scientific advances have improved treatment options for many global diseases, such as seen in the breast cancer treatment landscape over the last two decades, a lack of effective, low-cost diagnostics hinders the health of many in the developing world. Hence, quality healthcare, which includes early and effective testing, is key to improving the prognosis and quality of life for breast cancer patients and is part of Novartis' mission to help improve earlier diagnosis for aBC patients with PIK3CA mutation.”

Hareef Muhammed, CEO of Pantai Premier Pathology, said:

“With cheaper PIK3CA testing made available during this campaign, patients will no longer be shooting in the dark and gain confidence in their treatment pathway based on biomarker testing. In fact, we have noticed a tremendous uptake since the launch of the campaign in 2022, which emphasizes the importance of affordable

diagnostics testing.”

To date, the PIK3CA Booster Campaign has seen around 200 patients benefiting from the precise diagnosis leading to timely treatments that have helped improve and extend their quality of life.

Importance of early identification of PIK3CA mutations

PIK3CA is the most commonly mutated gene in HR+/HER2- aBC2 breast cancer patients.

The PIK3CA gene has important functions in the body – it makes one of the proteins in an enzyme called PI3K, which is involved in many vital functions in a cell. [1]

Mutations in the PIK3CA gene may cause the PI3K enzyme to become overactive and induce the proliferation of cancer cells. Breast cancer patients with this mutation are at high risk of suffering from endocrine resistance (ER), and a major challenge in treating ER-positive breast cancer is to overcome it.

Dr Mastura Md Yusoff, Consultant Oncologist at Pantai, said, “According to studies, up to 40% of advanced breast cancer patients have been found to have the PIK3CA gene mutation. As such, patients should undergo early detection to improve their prognosis and kickstart early intervention for improved outcome.” [2]

[1] Definition of PIK3CA gene - NCI Dictionary of Cancer Terms - NCI

[2] Endocrine-Resistant Breast Cancer: Mechanisms and Treatment - FullText - Breast Care 2020, Vol. 15, No. 4 - Karger Publishers

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Novartis is reimagining medicine to improve and extend people’s lives. As a leading global medicines company, we use innovative science and digital technologies to create transformative treatments in areas of great medical need. In our quest to find new medicines, we consistently rank among the world’s top companies investing in research and development. Novartis products reach nearly 800 million people globally and we are finding innovative ways to expand access to our latest treatments. About 108,000 people of more than 140 nationalities work at Novartis around the world. Find out more at <https://www.novartis.com>.

About Novartis Malaysia

Novartis Malaysia has been present in Malaysia since 1971. Following the merger of Sandoz and Ciba-Geigy, Novartis was formed in 1996. In 2015, Kuala Lumpur was chosen as one of the five Novartis Global Service Centres which delivers a broad variety of services to the Novartis group of companies worldwide. Services offered by the Kuala Lumpur team include IT, People & Organization services, FRA Operations, Procurement Services, Real Estate & Facilities Services and CONEXTS Services which include scientific and commercial services. In 2021, Novartis was ranked the top contributor by the Clinical Research Malaysia in sponsored research with 16 research projects, leading the market of other healthcare players in this sponsored research space

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List of links present in page

- <https://www.novartis.com/my-en/news/media-releases/novartis-malaysia-extended-molecular-diagnosis-program-abc-patients-pik3ca-gene>
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