

MEDIA RELEASE

Raffles Medical Group and NalaGenetics Provide Pre-emptive Genetic Testing for Adverse Drug Reactions

- Raffles is the first hospital in Singapore to provide pre-emptive pharmacogenomics testing protocol
- Aims to reduce side effects due to inappropriate medications

Singapore, 3 October 2022 – Raffles Medical Group (RMG) is collaborating with biotech start-up NalaGenetics to offer pre-emptive pharmacogenomics testing at its hospital. It is the first hospital in Singapore to provide such a service.

Pharmacogenomics is the study of how genes affect a person's response to medication. Pre-emptive pharmacogenomics testing on a healthy person can be used to discover whether a person is likely to respond well or develop adverse drug reactions (ADRs) to certain medications. The test results could then be used to guide doctors on the choice and dosage of medicine to improve patient outcome.

Collaboration to conduct study and offer commercial tests

The collaboration between RMG and NalaGenetics involves the recruitment of 500 patients to participate in a pilot study on pre-emptive pharmacogenomics testing and covers a range of chronic prescriptions in cardiovascular, psychiatry and pain, among others. The study aims to better understand how doctors leverage such information, while providing research data on the potential benefits of large-scale implementation in Singapore. The study will take place over one year and the recruitment starts on 3 October.

Patients who suffer from or are prone to 10 specified diseases will be eligible to take part in the study. Eligible participants will have their genetic samples collected via a non-invasive buccal swab at Raffles Hospital Singapore, which will then be tested by NalaGenetics in its laboratory. The test results will be integrated into the participants' electronic medical records at RMG. There is no cost involved to participate in the study.

RMG will also avail the testing as a commercial service to other interested patients or members of the public, with NalaGenetics as the testing partner. Such commercial testing will cover a much wider range of medications.

Benefits of pre-emptive pharmacogenomics testing

Providing pre-emptive pharmacogenomics testing is timely as Singapore is increasingly focusing on preventive health. Such testing could help to identify high-risk patients and avert side effects and even hospital admissions. For example, patients who have genetics that put them at risk of not being able to metabolise blood thinners well are up to two times more likely to experience recurring acute coronary syndrome¹. Research has also shown that 8 per cent of hospital admissions are caused by ADRs and 30 per cent of those have high genetic associations, and patients with ADRs have a longer length of stay on average².

“RMG is the first hospital in Singapore to offer pre-emptive pharmacogenomics testing. We believe that a patient’s genetic information can help facilitate our doctors’ decision-making process and result in more appropriate prescriptions and better patient outcomes. As a leading integrated healthcare provider, we have always leveraged technology to enhance patient care, and this innovative collaboration with NalaGenetics is yet another value-added service for our patients,” says Dr Chng Shih Kiat, Medical Director, Raffles Medical.

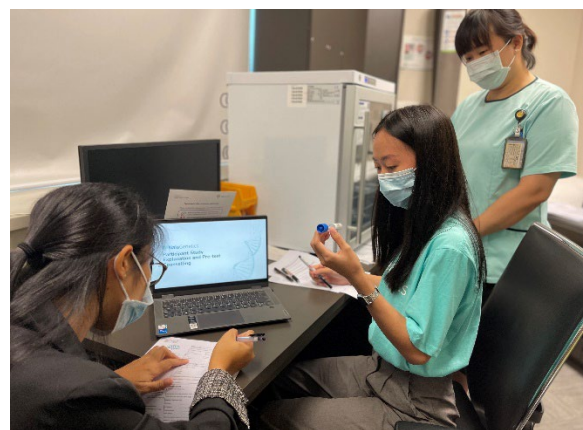
“We believe that pre-emptive pharmacogenomics testing not just improves outcomes for patients, it also helps in cutting healthcare costs by avoiding inappropriate treatments. There are potentially long-term cost savings from implementing such pre-emptive testing on a large-scale for governments and insurance companies,” says Ms Levana Sani, CEO of NalaGenetics.

She added: “This collaboration with RMG is very exciting for our team, because we get to implement our system end-to-end; from patient recruitment all the way to integration of patient reports to help physicians not only at the point of testing, but throughout the patients’ health journey.”

Those interested in taking the test can contact Raffles Executive Medical Centre at Raffles Hospital.



The team from RMG and NalaGenetics.



Participants’ test results will be integrated into the electronic medical records at RMG.

¹ <https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/10.1161/JAHA.121.024159>

² <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27640819/>

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About Raffles Medical Group

Founded in 1976, Raffles Medical Group (RMG or the Group) is one of the leading integrated private healthcare providers in the region, providing a continuum of services from primary and tertiary care to health insurance for people across Asia. A proudly Singaporean brand, RMG is listed on the mainboard of the Singapore stock exchange (SGX: BSL) and operates in 14 cities in five countries in Asia. This network includes four hospitals and over 100 multi-disciplinary clinics, offering services such as health screening, specialist care, diagnostic radiology, dental and traditional Chinese medicine. Together with over 2,700 employees, RMG brings more than 45 years of trusted healthcare expertise and care to over 2 million patients annually across our network as their trusted partner for health. For more information, please visit rafflesmedicalgroup.com.

About NalaGenetics

NalaGenetics Pte Ltd is an A*STAR spinoff that focuses on the design and development of genetic analysis and interpretation tools. The company develops wet-lab and dry-lab solutions to enable personalized prescription and screening in hospitals and labs.