

Postgrad research at UCSI

> Malaysian academics could play key roles in international research studies

NOT many know this but a Malaysian researcher played a key role in a global research project which shows that reduced sodium intake can lead to health problems, potentially leading to death.

UCSI University vice chancellor, Senior Prof Datuk Dr Khalid Yusoff is a member of the Prospective Urban Rural Epidemiological (PURE) study's global steering committee. He oversaw the running of the study in Malaysia which involved 15,000 people, around 15% of the global sample size.

The PURE study is the largest international study on sodium intake and health outcomes to date, and adds considerable strength to the contention that a moderate sodium intake is optimal.

Its findings have been published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, the world's leading medical journal. The study which tested 101,945 people from 18 countries for almost four years, shows that while a low sodium diet does indeed reduce blood pressure modestly, it comes with side effects.

This includes an adverse elevation of certain hormones like the renin-angiotensin-aldosterone system that regulates the body's water and salt balance, increasing the risk of strokes, heart attacks and other cardiovascular complications.

The PURE study also shows that a diet high in potassium, one with fish, fruits, beans and vegetables, is essential to the normal functioning of the body.

On his involvement with the PURE study, Khalid said Malaysian academics could play key roles in international research and more should seek to advance the pursuit of knowledge. "Regardless of the field, research should focus on pertinent matters that

ultimately benefit humanity," he said.

Sharing Khalid's passion for research, UCSI deputy vice chancellor (Research and Postgraduate Studies) Prof Datuk Dr Nizam Isa does much to bolster the university's research credentials.

Much of it has to do with his presence alone. A specialist in genomic medicine and human genetics, Nizam's pioneering work in the field has garnered him many "firsts", including being the founding director of the first Human Genome Centre in Malaysia back in 1993.

In that capacity, his work has paved the way for the future of genomic medicine in Malaysia—something that he calls his "vision and legacy for the future of Malaysians to advance in human genetics".

"What research I could not do at the time

due to technological constraints, the lack of research funding, or the lack of public awareness, the path has been paved for others to pursue it now," he said, adding that the centre is still pursuing advanced research in genomic medicine.

His wealth of experience and passion for research saw him appointed to manage and lead UCSI's Office of Research and Postgraduate Studies – something that he is enthusiastic about.

Nizam said the university is already making impact in research that matters. Many of its staff members are experienced researchers with notable projects and respected publications that have been funded by local and international research grants.

Research studies within the university stem from various fields including applied sciences, medicine, pharmacy, business, information science, engineering, and nanotechnology, just to name a few.

In line with Malaysia's aim to become a high income and innovative nation by 2020, UCSI is ramping up its efforts to boost the quality and global competitiveness of its postgraduate programmes—in order to meet

the need to enhance human capital development.

The university has 20 postgraduate programmes to date, with several more to be made known soon. To meet the needs of its students, the postgraduate programmes encompass the research, coursework and mix-mode structures.

Uniquely enough, the university also offers postgraduate programmes that incorporate management, entrepreneurship and business. Based on feedback from its industry partners and students, such components are necessary for those who intend to climb up the career ladder to the management level.

To ensure that its postgraduate programmes are accessible to the best and brightest, the university has also allocated

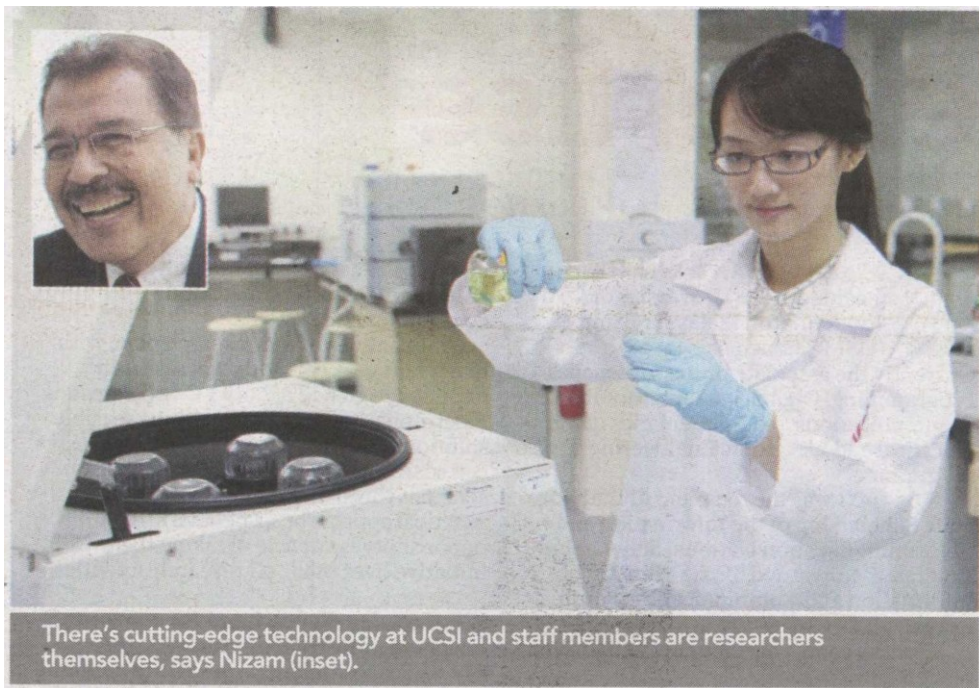
funds under the UCSI University Trust Graduate Fellowship, which offers both local and international qualified postgraduate students full or partial tuition fee waivers.

Additionally, Nizam and his team are constantly looking at possible means to help students secure postgraduate sponsorship – be it local, governmental or international sources.

To know more about the university's research projects or postgraduate programmes, visit its Open Day on Dec 20 (9am to 5pm) at its KL Campus (South

Wing), Taman Connaught.

For more information, visit
www.ucsiuniversity.edu.my/onlineenquiry
or call 03-9102 4739.



There's cutting-edge technology at UCSI and staff members are researchers themselves, says Nizam (inset).