

BY CLINICAL RESEARCH MALAYSIA

CRM Bulletin

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**SPOTLIGHTING
EXCELLENCE
IN MALAYSIAN
CLINICAL RESEARCH**

**RESEARCH
PERSONALITY**

Dr Chew Lee Ping

FEATURED SITE

Miri Hospital

**RISING STARS
IN HEMATOLOGY**





About Clinical Research Malaysia

Clinical Research Malaysia (CRM) is a Global Trusted Research Management Organisation established by the Ministry of Health Malaysia in 2012. The organisation is guided by the principles of Humanity, Stability and Sustainability in providing global clinical trial solutions and enabling a thriving clinical research ecosystem in the country. At its very core, CRM aims to bring clinical research that addresses the unmet needs of patients and transforms health outcomes in Malaysia.

CRM delivers sponsored clinical trials with Speed, Reliability and Quality through operational excellence and working with stakeholders by providing end-to-end clinical research support services. Certified with both ISO 9001:2015 (Quality Management System) and ISO 37001:2016 (Anti-Bribery Management System), and being aligned to international regulations, our core values and code of conduct are ingrained throughout CRM. The strength of this organisation lies in the people of CRM as we strive in our vision to make Malaysia the preferred clinical research hub in Asia.



From The CEO's Desk



Welcome to the 2nd Bulletin Issue of 2026!

As we reach quarter 3 of 2026, it is an opportune moment to reflect on the progress we have made and the collective efforts that continue to strengthen Malaysia's clinical research ecosystem.

The past few months have been a period of growth, collaboration, and meaningful advancement. Through the dedication of our research community, we have continued to expand awareness, enhance capabilities, and nurture the talent needed to support the future of clinical research in Malaysia.

This issue captures the key milestones and inspiring stories from June to August 2026, highlighting the achievements of our investigators, site teams, healthcare professionals, and partners who remain committed to driving excellence in clinical research.

In this issue, we celebrate the people and teams making a difference in clinical research. Our Research Personality feature highlights Dr. Chew Lee Ping, Consultant Haematologist at Hospital Umum Sarawak.

We also celebrate Malaysia's Rising Stars in Haematology, a group of emerging researchers whose dedication and expertise are helping shape the future of haematology research in Malaysia. Our Featured Site segment highlights Hospital Miri and its contribution to delivering high-quality clinical research.

Behind every achievement is teamwork, dedication, and a shared commitment to advancing research. As we enter the second half of the year, we remain focused on strengthening partnerships, supporting our research community, and creating more opportunities for clinical research in Malaysia.

Dr. Akhmal Yusof
CEO, Clinical Research Malaysia

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HIGHLIGHTS



Study Coordinator Accelerated Program (SCAP) Batch 2/2026

5 June 2026 – CRM's Study Coordinator Accelerated Program (SCAP) Batch 2/2026 officially kicked off, welcoming a new group of trainees into the clinical research field. Through structured training and practical learning, participants will build the knowledge and skills needed to support clinical trials with Speed, Quality, and Reliability. This programme reflects CRM's commitment to developing skilled and confident study coordinators to strengthen Malaysia's clinical research workforce.



CRM, VG-CARE and University of Tübingen MoU Signing

9 June 2026 - CRM, Vietnamese German Center for Medical Research (VG-CARE), and the Institutes of Tropical Medicine, Travel Medicine and Human Parasitology at Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen joined hands through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to strengthen collaboration in multi-regional clinical research, with a focus on infectious diseases. This partnership represents a shared commitment to advancing scientific discovery, connecting research communities across borders, and creating meaningful impact for patients worldwide.



CRM and NPRA Represent Malaysia at DIA Global Annual Meeting

17 June 2026 – CRM and NPRA represented Malaysia at the DIA Global Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, connecting with global healthcare leaders to discuss the future of clinical research, regulatory innovation, and technology-enabled healthcare. With AI transforming clinical development, Malaysia has new opportunities to strengthen its research ecosystem and drive innovation. Through engagements with the DIA Board, CRM shared Malaysia's progress in building clinical research capabilities and fostering global collaboration to improve patient access to new therapies.



Advancing Research and Innovation at Selangor Research Week

22 - 25 June 2026 - Selangor Research Week 2026 at Hospital Selayang brought together healthcare professionals to promote knowledge sharing and innovation. CRM participated through an exhibition booth and a session on "Harnessing AI in Clinical Trials: Opportunities for Malaysian Researchers", delivered by Ms. Asha Thanabalan, Lead of Business Development, CRM. The session explored AI's potential in clinical research, while the booth engaged clinicians interested in pursuing careers in clinical research.



Penang Research Open Day

23 - 24 June 2026 - CRM participated in the 2nd Penang Research Open Day, themed “Rhythm of Discovery for Tomorrow’s Intelligence”, engaging with clinicians interested in starting their clinical research journey. The event provided an opportunity to share insights on clinical research pathways and how healthcare professionals can get involved in advancing research.



Collaborating for Better Healthcare Outcomes: CRM Supports Pantai Hospital Ipoh's Research Initiatives

23 June 2026 - Pantai Hospital Ipoh's Research Day 2026 brought together clinicians, healthcare professionals, and researchers to showcase innovative research initiatives and promote evidence-based healthcare practices. The event featured 20 oral and e-poster presentations, along with insightful sessions on conducting research and advancing clinical excellence. CRM was honoured to contribute, with Mr Venoo Kuppusamy sharing insights on “Industry Sponsored Research and the Driving Role of CRM.”



Patient Recruitment & Retention Workshop

25 June & 19 August 2026 - CRM's Patient Recruitment team successfully hosted its second Patient Recruitment & Retention Workshop of 2026, bringing together 18 participants from internal and external stakeholders.

The session provided a platform for meaningful discussions, knowledge sharing, and practical insights to enhance patient recruitment and retention strategies in clinical research.



CRM and MREC Explore Emerging Ethical Challenges in AI and Mental Healthcare Research

1 July 2026 - CRM representatives attended the MREC CME: Special Seminar organised by the Medical Research & Ethics Committee (MREC), MOH, featuring discussions on emerging ethical considerations in AI and mental healthcare. The seminar brought together researchers and healthcare professionals to exchange insights on the evolving landscape of clinical research ethics and the challenges of conducting studies in these areas.



National Regulatory Conference 2026

30 June - 2 July 2026 - CRM joined industry leaders, regulators, and healthcare professionals at the National Regulatory Conference 2026 to explore the future of pharmaceutical regulation and innovation. From AI and digital transformation to evolving regulatory pathways, the conference highlighted how technology and collaboration are shaping a more agile and connected healthcare landscape. Together, we continue to support progress towards safer, smarter, and more efficient healthcare solutions.



International Congress Of Medicine & Health 2026 (iCoMedH 2026)

3 - 4 July 2026 - CRM participated in iCoMedH 2026 as an exhibitor and programme contributor, connecting with healthcare professionals, researchers, and industry partners to promote clinical research in Malaysia.

CRM also hosted a session titled “Together Through Trials: Empowering the Participant Voice”, highlighting how patient experiences can help shape more meaningful and patient-centred clinical trials.



ASCOMOS 2026

3 - 5 July 2026 - CRM participated in the 37th Annual Scientific Congress of the Malaysian Oncological Society (ASCOMOS) 2026 and the 59th Malaysia-Singapore Congress of Medicine, joining healthcare professionals, researchers, and industry partners in advancing oncology care.

The congress provided an opportunity to exchange knowledge, build meaningful connections, and explore the latest developments in cancer research and treatment.



CRM Supports CEPI Workshop on Future Pandemic Readiness

6 July 2026 - CRM joined the 2026 Asia Pacific Regional Regulatory Preparedness Multi-Country Tabletop Workshop organised by CEPI, alongside global and regional partners, to strengthen preparedness for future pandemics.

The workshop highlighted the importance of regulatory readiness, clinical research collaboration, data sharing, and equitable access in accelerating vaccine development.

REFRESHER WORKSHOP 1/2026



CRM Hosts GCP Refresher Workshop to Strengthen Clinical Research Standards

10 July 2026 – CRM successfully hosted its 1st Good Clinical Practice (GCP) Refresher Workshop of 2026, providing participants with the opportunity to refresh their knowledge, exchange insights, and strengthen their understanding of GCP best practices.



Strengthening GCP Inspection Readiness

13 July 2026 - CRM successfully conducted the Trial Site Inspection Readiness Workshop 1/2026, bringing together participants to strengthen their knowledge and preparedness for GCP inspections.

The workshop covered key inspection preparation areas and updates to the Malaysian GCP 5th Edition, with practical insights shared by Ms. Poh Wen Tsin, Mr. Ahmad Izwan and Ms. Jacinda Khoo from NPRA's GCP and GLP Section, Centre for Compliance and Quality Control.

The workshop highlighted the importance of regulatory readiness in supporting quality and compliance across Malaysia's clinical research community.



ISO 9001:2015 Internal Audit Training

20 July 2026 - CRM continues to build a culture of excellence through continuous learning and improvement. The team recently participated in a two-day Internal Audit Training to enhance their understanding of ISO 9001:2015 internal auditing and further strengthen CRM's Quality Management System (QMS).

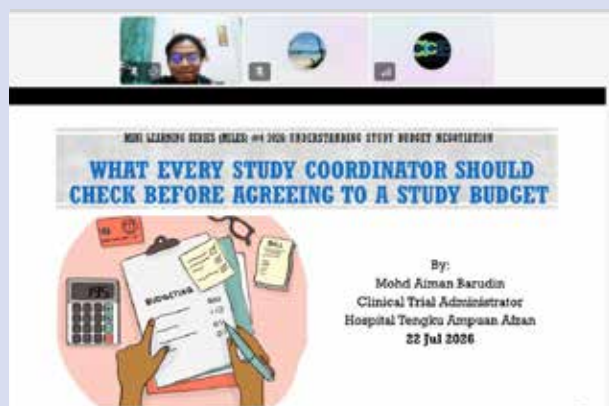


CRM's Phase 1 Realisation Project Advances Malaysia's Global Presence in Early Phase Oncology Research

22 July 2026 – Dr Voon Pei Jye from Sarawak General Hospital represented Malaysia at the inaugural AACR D3 Conference, highlighting the country's growing capabilities in oncology drug development.

This achievement reflects the impact of CRM's Phase 1 Realisation Project (P1RP) in strengthening early phase clinical research through talent development, infrastructure, and collaboration.

Together, we continue to build Malaysia's reputation as a trusted partner in global clinical research.



CRM MiLeS #4 Enhances Understanding of Study Budget Negotiation Strategies

22 July 2026 – CRM's Mini Learning Series (MiLeS) #4: Understanding Study Budget Negotiation successfully brought together participants for an insightful learning session on study budget components and negotiation strategies.



CRM's I AM AWARE Initiative Continues to Raise Awareness of Clinical Research

23 July & 9 - 10 August 2026 - The I AM AWARE initiative continued its outreach in July and August, engaging patients, visitors and the public at Hospital Putrajaya and Hospital Sultanah Bahiyah, Alor Setar.

Through open conversations and accessible information, the initiative aims to help more people understand clinical research, clinical trials and the importance of public participation in advancing healthcare.



CRM 2nd Board of Directors Meeting 2026

27 July 2026 - CRM successfully held its 2nd Board of Directors Meeting 2026, chaired by the Minister of Health, Dr. Dzulkefly Ahmad, highlighting key achievements and progress in the first half of the year. The meeting recognised CRM's continued efforts in strengthening patient recruitment, investigator networks, and clinical trial capabilities, supported by the commitment of our partners and research community.

CRM also welcomed Datin Paduka Dr Teo Soo-Hwang to the Board, bringing valuable expertise to further drive innovation and excellence in clinical research.



SCRI Clinical Trials Symposium 2026

30 - 31 July 2026 – CRM participated in the SCRI Clinical Trials Symposium 2026, held alongside SCRI's 30th anniversary celebration, connecting with global partners to exchange insights and explore opportunities to strengthen clinical research collaboration.

CRM CEO, Dr. Akhmal Yusof, also shared Malaysia's perspective during the Asia-focused session, "Positioning Asia as a Global Trial Hub," highlighting the country's growing role in the global clinical trials landscape.



NERCIM 2026

4 August 2026 – CRM co-organised the NERCIM Conference 2026 with MREC, bringing together ethics committees from private hospitals and universities to strengthen collaboration and promote a more unified ethical review ecosystem in Malaysia. The conference provided a valuable platform for sharing experiences, addressing challenges, and exchanging best practices to enhance ethical review processes.



9th JKWPKL & Putrajaya and 4th HRC Research Day 2026

6 -7 August 2026 – CRM participated in the 9th JKWPKL & Putrajaya and 4th HRC Research Day 2026 at Hospital Rehabilitasi Cheras, officiated by Datuk Dr Nor Fariza Ngah, Deputy Director General of Health (Research & Technical Support), MOH.

CRM CEO, Dr Akhmal Yusof, joined the forum session, “Human-Centred Research: Advancing Innovation, Empowering Lives,” while CRM’s exhibition booth highlighted its role in facilitating industry-sponsored clinical research in Malaysia.



Strengthening Partnerships to Advance Clinical Research in Malaysia

8 August 2026 – CRM was pleased to welcome Dr Raman Shetty, Vice President of Trial Operations (ALAMP), Novo Nordisk, for an inter-stakeholder engagement session, following an earlier round table discussion organised by Novo Nordisk with key stakeholders in the clinical research ecosystem. The round table provided a valuable platform for open discussions on Malaysia’s evolving clinical research landscape, while the engagement session highlighted key advancements including faster study start-up timelines, decentralised clinical trials, expanded Phase 1 capabilities, and stronger collaboration among regulators, researchers, and industry partners.



IMDEC 2026

26 - 28 August 2026 – CRM participated in IMDEC 2026, organised by the Medical Device Authority (MDA) and officiated by Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad, bringing together key stakeholders across the medical device and healthcare sectors.

CRM CEO, Dr Akhmal Yusof, spoke at the session “Bridging Innovation and Evidence: Clinical Research in the Era of Next-Gen Medical Devices,” highlighting the critical role of clinical evidence in advancing medical innovation and healthcare outcomes.

Who Research Is Really For

By: Dr Akhmal Yusof, CEO Clinical Research Malaysia & Nadiyah Hanim Abdul Latif President, Malaysian Rare Disorders Society. Published under Focus column of The Star (online)

Every year on May 20, Clinical Trials Day commemorates the clinical study conducted by James Lind in 1747 to investigate treatments for scurvy. It is an occasion to recognise scientific progress and the contributions of researchers, healthcare professionals, regulators, sponsors, patient organisations and, most importantly, the people who participate in clinical research.

However, Clinical Trials Day should be more than a celebration of scientific milestones. It should prompt us to ask a fundamental question: Who is research really for?

Clinical trials are not solely about generating data, securing approvals or developing new treatments. Their central purpose is to improve lives. Behind every protocol is a patient, a caregiver and often a family navigating hope and uncertainty. Each participant brings more than a diagnosis. They bring prior healthcare experiences, present concerns and expectations for the future.

Patients must be recognised as equal partners

One of the greatest misunderstandings within the healthcare research ecosystem is the assumption that patients are simply recipients of expert knowledge. Patients may not possess formal qualifications in medicine or clinical research, but they possess another form of expertise: lived experience.

During CRM Trial Connect, Dato' Dr Saunthari Somasundaram, President of the National Cancer Society of Malaysia, highlighted this imbalance. She observed that conversations about patients are still frequently conducted by healthcare professionals, organisational leaders and policymakers when a person with direct lived experience should also be at the table.

Her own family's experience illustrates the gap. Her mother survived seven different cancers, yet clinical trial participation was never discussed with her—not even once. If a family with strong medical connections was not informed about possible research opportunities, we must consider how many other patients may never hear about clinical trials at all.

Malaysia has policies, ethical frameworks and research structures. However, the gap between having a framework and implementing it meaningfully remains significant.

Patient participation cannot be reduced to obtaining a signature on a consent form or inviting a representative to attend a meeting after all major decisions have already been made.

Patients should be engaged early enough to influence the questions being asked, the design of the study, the outcomes being measured and the way information is communicated. Their contribution must have a visible impact on decision-making.

The principle of “nothing about us without us” should not be treated as a slogan. It should be reflected throughout the research process. There is sometimes a belief that patients understand only their individual experiences and therefore cannot contribute to wider research decisions. This overlooks the fact that expertise is developed through learning and opportunity.

Researchers and clinicians were not born with an understanding of research methods, clinical medicine or healthcare systems. They were educated and given opportunities to develop that knowledge. Patients and caregivers should similarly be provided with the training, information and platforms required to translate their lived experience into meaningful research contributions.

A person living with a condition every day may recognise burdens and changes that are not captured by conventional clinical measurements. Caregivers understand the practical consequences of treatment schedules, side effects, repeated hospital visits and complex medication regimens. They know which outcomes genuinely improve daily life, and which outcomes may appear statistically significant without making a meaningful difference to the patient.

This is particularly clear in rare diseases, where patients and families may spend years searching for a diagnosis and become highly knowledgeable about conditions that many healthcare professionals rarely encounter. However, the same principle applies across cancer, chronic illnesses, infectious diseases, disabilities and other health conditions.

Patients need more than promising research

Clinical trials depend heavily on trust. Yet the relationship between patients and the research system often contains an inbuilt imbalance. For clinical research to serve patients, we must ask more than whether a trial is scientifically promising.

First, is the trial available? A suitable clinical trial may not be offered in the patient's country, state or hospital, leaving them with no opportunity to participate.

Second, is it accessible? Even when a trial is available, patients may not know about it, receive a referral or understand the enrolment process. Information must therefore reach patients in a clear and timely way.

Third, is participation affordable? Although the treatment may be provided free of charge, families may still face transport, accommodation, meals, childcare and loss of income. These additional costs may make participation unrealistic.

Fourth, is the trial acceptable and practical? Its design should respect the patient's culture, faith, diet, disability, age and family responsibilities. A medicine may be difficult to swallow, contain unsuitable ingredients or require frequent hospital visits that a patient or caregiver cannot manage.

Finally, is it sustainable? Patients deserve to know what happens after the trial ends. Will an effective treatment become available in Malaysia? Will participants continue to have access to it?

Patients should not be asked to carry the risks and burdens of research only to discover that the resulting treatment will remain inaccessible to them. A trial that creates hope without a credible post-trial access pathway risks damaging rather than strengthening public trust.

When lived experience shapes science

Scientific progress is often celebrated through groundbreaking discoveries, cutting-edge technologies and medical innovations. Yet the true measure of progress is not found solely in laboratories or research papers, but in the lives of the people those discoveries are meant to serve.

For Dr Pooja Sharma, Founder CEO APAR Health Clinical, years spent across surgery, clinical research, patient advocacy, philanthropy and research support have reinforced a simple but profound truth: the most enduring lessons in healthcare are often taught by patients themselves.

Clinical practice has a way of revealing humanity in its purest form. A terminally ill patient, despite facing the end of life, found the strength to ask whether a young doctor had taken the time to eat during a demanding residency shift.

A pharmacist, entrusted with administering the first dose of a newly developed vaccine to his healthy infant, demonstrated unwavering confidence in the scientific process by placing his own child at its forefront. A child diagnosed with retinoblastoma, abandoned by parents overwhelmed by the burden of illness, not only survived but went on to establish a survivor support group, inspiring countless others through poetry and drama. These are not simply moving stories. They are powerful reminders of why research exists in the first place.

Scientific advancement can sometimes become preoccupied with metrics and technological breakthroughs. While these remain essential, they should never overshadow the human purpose that underpins every clinical trial. Behind every protocol lies an individual waiting for hope, better treatment or a chance at a fuller life.

The experiences encountered throughout a medical and research career continue to shape every discussion around science and policy, serving as a constant reminder that innovation without empathy risks losing sight of the very people it is intended to benefit.

Perhaps the most important question for every researcher, clinician and policymaker is not how advanced a new discovery may be, but how meaningfully it will improve a patient's everyday life. When lived experience is allowed to shape science, innovation becomes more than progress—it becomes purpose.



Photo were taken during CRM Trial Connect 2026 Conference.

From left: Dato' Dr. Saunthari Somasundaram (President of the National Cancer Society of Malaysia), Ms. Diana Rose De Silva (Patient Advocate, Yellow Warrior Society Philippines, Inc.), Dr Akhmal Yusof (CRM CEO), Ms Nidhi Swarup (Founding Chair, APOS) and Ms Nadiyah Hanim (President of Malaysian Rare Disorder Society).

RESEARCH PERSONALITY



Dr Chew Lee Ping

Consultant Haematologist, Sarawak General Hospital

About Dr Chew Lee Ping

Dr. Chew Lee Ping is a Consultant Clinical Haematologist at Hospital Umum Sarawak, specialising in the management of malignant and non-malignant blood disorders, with a particular focus on lymphoma and red blood cell disorders.

She earned her MD from Universiti Sains Malaysia and MRCP(UK), followed by specialist training in Haematology at Hospital Kuala Lumpur and further training at Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre in Melbourne, Australia.

Beyond her clinical practice, Dr. Chew is actively engaged in clinical research and multicentre trials, serving as Principal Investigator for numerous haematology studies. She also serves as Deputy Director of the Clinical Research Centre, Sarawak General Hospital, and has been recognised among its Top 5 Investigators. In 2021, her research team made history as the first global recruiter for a First-in-Patient haematology study, highlighting Malaysia's growing contribution to international clinical research.

Let's dive into Dr. Chew's journey in clinical research, the experiences that have shaped her work, and her perspective on advancing haematology research in Malaysia.

How did you first become involved in clinical research, and what inspired you to pursue the role of a clinical investigator?

My journey in clinical research began in 2003, at a time when the field was still entirely new and unfamiliar to me. While posted to Kuching for my physician gazettement, I was given the opportunity by Dato' Dr. Chew Peng Hong to join his asthma clinical trial—an experience that even included attending an investigators' meeting in South Africa. Participating in that trial and adhering strictly to standardized protocol procedures showed me firsthand how aligning care with international guidelines directly translated into better patient management.

In essence, clinical research was teaching me how to be a better physician. During that same period, I had the privilege of attending cardiology teaching sessions under Prof. Datuk Amar Dr. Sim Kui Hian, who was then Head of Cardiology in Sarawak. Operating out of a modest office, he was conducting an impressive volume of cardiovascular research driven by pure passion and a commitment to his patients. Seeing what he accomplished despite limited physical space taught me an invaluable lesson: the success of clinical research relies on the vision and dedication of the people involved, not the size of the building. Later, during my haematology fellowship at Hospital Kuala Lumpur, I had the privilege of working under another remarkable mentor, Dato' Dr. Chang Kian Meng, who went on to serve as Chairman of the Medical Research and Ethics Committee (MREC).

Looking back, I am deeply grateful to these three mentors. Their leadership, passion, and guidance were instrumental in inspiring me to become a clinical investigator today.

How has your experience as a clinical haematologist influenced the research questions, studies and patient needs that you have chosen to pursue?

I pursue clinical research to give my patients better treatment options. With every study, my goal is to uncover scientific value that directly improves their care. Today, haematology is advancing at an unprecedented pace—from non-malignant conditions like thalassaemia and PNH to oncological diseases like lymphoma and leukaemia. These breakthroughs are not just extending survival; they are fundamentally enhancing our patients' quality of life.

What were the most significant challenges you faced during the early stages of your research career, and how did these experiences shape your current approach to clinical trials?

Managing haematology services as a solo haematologist for a decade in a high-volume hospital—while regularly traveling across Sarawak to run outreach clinics—presented immense challenges. Balancing a heavy patient load against limited time, all while raising two young children, required continuous resilience. I could not have sustained it without the unwavering support of my husband, and a dedicated team of young doctors who eventually grew into my trusted colleagues in haematology care. Traveling across Sarawak also gave me the privilege of mentoring doctors in regional hospitals, inspiring them to engage in clinical trials, and ultimately expanding access to advanced research and care for patients far beyond Kuching.

How did the opportunity to lead the First-in-Patient study arise, and what knowledge, experience and preparation enabled you to take on a study of this complexity?

I must extend my deepest gratitude to Prof. Datuk Amar Dr. Sim Kui Hian for his visionary leadership in establishing a world-class Phase 1 research center here in Sarawak. Without his foresight, our Phase 1 capabilities simply would not exist. He accelerated the region's research infrastructure and truly put Sarawak General Hospital on the global research map.

Conducting a first-in-human study builds naturally on our daily clinical practice—it simply demands an even higher degree of vigilance. What I find most rewarding about early-phase trials is the science itself: having the unique opportunity to collaborate directly with principal scientists to analyze drug effects and adverse events, an experience rarely available in standard public hospital practice.

Of course, no investigator succeeds alone, and I am profoundly grateful for our exceptional team of pharmacists, medical officers, and research coordinators whose precision ensures our success and safeguards our patients.

What factors enabled the first eligible participant to be enrolled ahead of the other international sites, and what did becoming the global first recruiter mean to you personally and professionally?

I had my patients in mind when I accepted the offer to run this Phase 1 trial. I felt a deep frustration watching available treatments fall short, unable to get them better. So, when the science advanced and the opportunity arose, I seized it for them. Yet, despite these milestones, my core identity remains unchanged. Clinical research is a passionate pursuit, but serving as a public sector physician is my calling. First and foremost, I am a doctor. Second, I am a mother. And third—I am a physician seeking answers through science: a researcher

How do you communicate the potential risks, possible benefits and uncertainties of an early-phase study to patients and their families while ensuring that informed consent remains voluntary and properly understood?

When I speak to my patients, I speak with complete honesty. The individuals who join my research trials are the same patients I care for day in and day out; our bond is built on years of trust between my team, my patients, and their families. When we walk through the consent process, there are no empty promises or coaxing—only the honest hope that the treatment may help them. What we do promise is that we will hold their hand every step of the way, and that we are reachable at any time if they feel unwell. Because early-phase research operates with limited data, every trial is a journey of learning together. We walk that path hand-in-hand as doctor and patient, navigating the unknown as a team.

What advice would you give aspiring principal investigators, and what legacy do you hope to leave for Malaysia's next generation of clinical researchers?

I encourage you to enjoy the journey of discovery. Pursue research that speaks to you as a physician—the kind that answers real questions you face at the bedside. Research enriches clinical practice and elevates the care you deliver every day. It should complement who you are as a doctor, and it's never too late to take that first step.



From left: With fellow investigators Dr Leong Tze Shin, Dr Janice Wong, Dr Grace Lee



From left: With study coordinators Felicia Kavita, Nurul Haniza and Noor Annisa



Dr Chew Lee Ping in consultation with patient



Dr Chew Lee Ping's Professional Journey

1999

Graduated with a Doctor of Medicine (MD) from Universiti Sains Malaysia

2003

Obtained Membership of the Royal Colleges of Physicians (MRCP UK)

2008

Appointed as a Clinical Haematologist in Malaysia

2009

Appointed as Sarawak State Clinical Haematologist

2012

- Appointed Deputy, Clinical Research Centre, Sarawak General Hospital
- Embarked on a journey in advancing clinical research and research capacity in Sarawak

2014

Began contributing as a Good Clinical Practice (GCP) Trainer in Sarawak

2019

Awarded Fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh (FRCP Edin.)

2021–2024

Served on the National Specialist Registration Committee for Haematology, Malaysian Medical Council

2022

- Appointed Clinical Expert Reporter in Haematology for the Drug Control Authority
- Appointed Member of the Malaysian Haematologist Examination Committee

2024–2028

- Council Member, Malaysian Society of Haematology
- Contributing to the advancement of haematology practice and professional development

2025

- Member, Sarawak Infectious Disease Centre Science Committee
- Member, Sarawak Infectious Disease Centre Joint Research Ethics Committee (SJREC)
- Panel Member for Clinical Haematology Specialist Registration, Sarawak

2026

- Awarded Fellowship of the College of Physicians Malaysia (FCoPM)
- Council Member, Society of Patient Blood Management (2026–2028)
- Contributing to clinical trial safety, research governance and specialist evaluation

RISING STARS IN HEMATOLOGY

Haematology continues to be an active area of clinical research in Malaysia. From 2015 to 2025, a total of 87 sponsored haematology studies were conducted in the country, reflecting continued efforts to advance research, treatment and care for patients with blood disorders. Behind these studies are clinician-researchers who play an important role in translating research into better patient care and outcomes. In this issue, we shine a spotlight on the next generation of haematology researchers, featuring Dr Nur Aini Syakirah, Dr Carol Goh Chew Yuen, Dr Christopher Liam and Dr Yong Kar Ying as our Rising Stars in Haematology. Their dedication to clinical practice and research reflects the continued growth of expertise and research capacity in this field.

Dr Nur Aini Syakirah

Physician, Raja Perempuan Zainab II Hospital, Kelantan

Areas of Interest in Research

Clinical Haematology, Thalassaemia and Haematological Disorders



Dr Aini's medical journey began at Universiti Sains Malaysia, where she completed her medical degree in 2008. After postgraduate training in Internal Medicine, she pursued Clinical Haematology, completing her Master of Medicine in 2016 and Clinical Haematology Fellowship in 2021. Driven by a belief in the power of evidence-based research to improve patient outcomes, she progressed from Sub-Investigator to Principal Investigator, contributing to multinational clinical trials and strengthening Malaysia's role in global haematology research. Mentorship has been central to her career, shaping her approach to medicine, research and patient care. A key milestone was leading a multicentre study on iron chelation therapy for patients with thalassaemia, strengthening her expertise in patient safety, regulatory compliance and scientific integrity. Today, her research focuses on personalised thalassaemia care, optimising iron chelation, reducing treatment burden and improving quality of life.

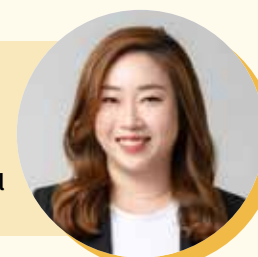
Alongside her clinical and research work, Dr Aini mentors future clinicians and researchers as a postgraduate trainer and honorary lecturer. She believes research should complement clinical practice and ultimately improve patient care. Looking ahead, she hopes to strengthen Malaysia's role in international haematology research, expand access to innovative therapies and nurture the next generation of clinician-investigators.

Dr Carol Goh Chew Yuen

Clinical Haematologist, Pulau Pinang Hospital

Areas of Interest in Research

Clinical Haematology, Chronic Myeloid Leukaemia and Haematological Disorders



Dr Carol graduated from the International Medical University (IMU) in 2012, obtained the MRCP (UK) in 2017 and completed her Clinical Haematology Fellowship in 2023. In recognition of her contributions to medicine, she was elected a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians (FRCP UK) in 2026. Her passion for haematology grew from its scientific complexity, advancing therapies and long-term patient relationships. This led her to pursue clinical research to generate evidence, optimise treatments and improve patient care.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, she reported a probable case of vaccine-induced immune thrombotic thrombocytopenia (VITT), receiving the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh's 2022 Case of the Quarter Prize. The experience reinforced her belief in the value of clinical observation and knowledge sharing. Today, her research focuses on chronic myeloid leukaemia (CML), particularly treatment-free remission, treatment optimisation and challenges related to tyrosine kinase inhibitors. Shaped by mentorship and multidisciplinary collaboration, Dr Carol aims to address local healthcare needs, expand access to innovative therapies and strengthen clinical research in Malaysia.

Dr Christopher Liam

Hematologist, Sultanah Aminah Hospital, Johor Bahru

Areas of Interest in Research

Haematological Malignancies, Stem Cell Transplantation, Platelet Disorders and Clinical Research



Dr Christopher began his medical career at Hospital Umum Sarawak in 2009 and obtained the MRCP (UK) in 2014 before serving as a physician at Hospital Sultanah Nora Ismail, Batu Pahat. In 2018, he was selected for Clinical Haematology subspecialty training at Hospital Ampang, with overseas exposure in Perth, Australia.

His interest in research grew through clinical practice and mentorship. During fellowship, he gained clinical trial experience as a sub-investigator in a Phase III study of an eculizumab biosimilar for patients with paroxysmal nocturnal haemoglobinuria (PNH). His research has since expanded across multiple myeloma, stem cell transplantation, leukaemia and platelet disorders, with a focus on addressing clinical needs in Malaysia. A key research interest is treatment-free remission (TFR) in chronic myeloid leukaemia (CML), exploring personalised approaches that improve quality of life and reduce treatment burden. His involvement in regional collaborations, including the PLASMIC-LDH study, has strengthened his experience in multicentre research.

A notable milestone was contributing to the first site initiation visit in the Asia-Pacific region for a sponsored study. Looking ahead, Dr Christopher aims to strengthen Malaysia's role in global haematology research, expand multicentre collaborations and inspire more clinicians to engage in research.

Dr Yong Kar Ying

Hematologist, Miri Hospital

Areas of Interest in Research

Haematological Disorders, Malignant Haematology and Clinical Research



Dr Yong began her medical journey at Sarawak General Hospital, Kuching, completing her housemanship in 2008. Her early experience in primary and community care at Klinik Kesihatan Tatau shaped her understanding of patient-centred care and the challenges patients face beyond the hospital setting. She obtained the MRCP in 2013 and completed Internal Medicine specialist training at Hospital Miri in 2016. In 2018, she pursued Clinical Haematology subspecialty training at Sarawak General Hospital, Hospital Ampang and National University Hospital (NUH), Singapore, gaining experience across a range of haematological conditions and a deeper appreciation of how research can advance patient care.

Returning to Hospital Miri as a Clinical Haematologist in 2022, Dr Yong brought specialist expertise and a strong commitment to developing clinical research opportunities in Northern Sarawak. Her research journey began in 2014 as a sub-investigator and progressed to Principal Investigator, with research spanning leukaemia, lymphoma, multiple myeloma and other haematological disorders. For Dr Yong, clinical practice and research are closely connected. Clinical trials can address real-world healthcare needs while providing eligible patients access to emerging therapies. In Northern Sarawak, geographical, financial and logistical barriers can make research participation challenging, highlighting the importance of collaboration, trust and patient-centred care.

Building a stronger research culture at Hospital Miri is central to her vision. She hopes to encourage young clinicians to pursue research while strengthening multidisciplinary collaboration and research capabilities in the region. Looking ahead, Dr Yong aims to expand access to innovative therapies and strengthen Northern Sarawak's contribution to clinical research, helping ensure advances in haematology reach patients regardless of geographical location.

INFOGRAPHIC

Recruitment Achievements in Global Sponsored Research 2026

Global 1st Recruiter

Kuala Lumpur Hospital

Dr Sandya Subramaniam
Prostate Cancer

Sabah Women and Children Hospital

Dr Cheo Seng Wee
Advanced Solid Tumors

Ampang Hospital

Dr Veena A/P V Selvaratnam
Multiple Myeloma

Sarawak General Hospital

Dr Leong Tze Shin
Multiple Myeloma

1st JAPAC & 3rd Global Recruiter

Kuala Lumpur Hospital

Dr Prathepamalar Yehgambaram
Advanced Solid Tumor

SEA 1st Recruiter

Sarawak General Hospital

Dr Voon Pei Jye
Advanced Solid Tumor

Top Malaysia Recruiter

Hospital Canselor Tuanku Muhriz UKM

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Andrea Ban Yu-Lin
Asthma

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

Dr Lily Wong Lee Lee
Paroxysmal Nocturnal Hemoglobinuria

FEATURED SITE

Miri Hospital



Hospital Miri is a major specialist government hospital in northern Sarawak, serving the Miri population and acting as a referral centre for Hospital Marudi, Hospital Limbang and Hospital Lawas. While the immediate population of the Miri district itself is approximately 250,000 to 400,000 residents, the hospital's total catchment area is significantly wider because it acts as the main specialist referral destination for several surrounding rural and northern districts.

Miri District (including sub-districts like Niah, Sibuti, Bekenu, and Suai), Limbang District, Lawas District, Marudi District (including Long Lama), Baram Basin & Highlands (including Ulu Baram, Bakelalan, and the Bario highlands)

Miri Hospital Specialties
Medical Unit
Surgical Unit
Ophthalmology Unit
Radiology
Pharmacy
ENT
O&G
Orthopedic
Laboratory
Anesthesiology
Paediatric
Psychiatric
Emergency Department
Rehabilitation Unit

Miri Hospital Team

311
Doctors

627
Nurses

84
Pharmacists

365
Total No. of Staff

461
Beds

800,000
Population Served
source: Hospital Miri



Old Building of Miri Hospital



Entrance to Miri Hospital

Clinical Research at Miri Hospital

The Clinical Research Centre, Hospital Miri (CRC Hospital Miri) was officially launched by YB Datuk Lee Kim Shin, Sarawak Assistant Minister of Communication & Sports, on 10 February 2012.

Its vision is to become a leading clinical research institution in Asia, with a mission to improve patient health outcomes through ethical and high-quality clinical research.

The centre aims to strengthen research capacity by developing data resources and providing training, serving as a resource centre for clinical research in Miri, promoting contract research among clinicians through feasibility assessments, and supporting researchers by providing research services and facilities.

From 2014 to 2026, Hospital Miri has grown from an emerging research centre into a tertiary clinical-research site supporting investigator-led research and multinational clinical trials across various therapeutic areas.

Five key achievements:

- Built a strong research culture through investigator-led studies, publications and CRC support.
- Established itself as a key clinical-trial site in northern Sarawak, serving a large referral population.
- Expanded research across multiple therapeutic areas, including nephrology, diabetes, haematology, surgery, infectious diseases and respiratory medicine.
- Participated in multinational clinical trials, including complex Phase II/III studies, with notable recruitment milestones.
- Strengthened research infrastructure and capabilities through dedicated CRC facilities, trained staff, GCP training and collaborations with Clinical Research Malaysia.

Clinical studies involved in Hospital Miri from 2014 to 2026 across all sponsors and research partners.

Awarded	62
Ongoing	8
Recruiting	10
Start-up	15
Closed/ Completed	35
Terminated/ Withdrawn	9



CRC Office



CRC laboratory



CRC clinic

Miri Hospital's Recruitment Achievements

Achievement	Study	Year
Malaysia's 1 st Recruiter	Respiratory Syncytial Virus	2017
	Influenza A Infections in Adolescent, Adult, and Elderly Hospitalized Patients	2018
	Respiratory Syncytial Virus Infection	2020
	SINOVAC	2021
	KINTOR GT0918	2021
	Genova	2022
	Respiratory Tract Infection	2022
	Eosinophilic Asthmat	2025
	Atrial Fibrillation (AF)	2025

Facilities



Centrifuge (ambient & refrigerator)



Consultation room



Freezer (-20&-80) and fridge



Infusion and spirometry area

MEET OUR TEAM

Izzah 'Atirah Binti Hisham (Associate Regional Manager East Coast B)

2023 CEO Award: Global Fee – Ver! Overachieved Patient Recruitment at Multiple Global, APAC & Country Level

2025 CEO Award: HTAA's Glow Up: Proven Locally, Recognized Globally



As an Associate Regional Manager, what does your role involve in ensuring clinical research activities run smoothly across the East Coast region?

My role is mainly about ensuring that clinical research activities across the East Coast region are well coordinated, supported, and aligned, while maintaining adherence to GCP and study requirements. This includes overseeing site performance, identifying and managing risks, supporting recruitment and timelines, maintaining engagement with internal and external parties, and working closely with internal and external stakeholders to resolve issues, address challenges, and continuously improve site performance, so that our sites are well positioned for future studies while maintaining the quality and standards of the research we deliver.

Clinical trials require strong teamwork and coordination. What is one principle you always keep in mind when supporting your team?

I believe leadership starts with how we respond to challenges, how we treat people, how we take responsibility, how we come back stronger after every setback, and how we remain professional even when situations are difficult. At the same time, I recognise that I am still learning and continuously improving myself as a leader. As humans, we all make mistakes, and leaders are no exception. What matters is having the humility to acknowledge those mistakes, learn from them, and come back better. That is why I strongly believe in leading by example. I cannot expect my team to demonstrate qualities that I am not willing to demonstrate myself. For me, leading by example means showing accountability, resilience, professionalism, and a willingness to learn, not just when things are going well, but especially when things don't go as planned.

What's one small win at work that always makes your day better?

One small win that always makes my day better is knowing I've made progress or improved something. It could be clearing my to-do list, resolving a pending issue, receiving minimal findings in a report, or finally getting something done after several follow-ups. These may seem small, but they reflect the effort, coordination and planning behind the scenes. For me, knowing I've solved a problem, overcome a challenge or simply moved something forward is already a win.

What's one moment in your career that reminded you why you chose clinical research?

One moment that has stayed with me is seeing patients improve throughout a study and knowing I was part of their treatment journey. It became even more personal because my family has also benefited from treatments made possible through clinical research. Seeing research from both a patient and family perspective showed me how meaningful it can be to have another treatment option. Knowing that the work we do today can contribute to better treatments and healthcare for future patients continues to motivate me.

How do you see clinical research and the role of clinical research professionals evolving, and what advice would you give those entering the field?

As we enter the AI era, technology will play a greater role in clinical research. However, I believe quality research will always depend on the people behind it—our critical thinking, decision-making, communication, empathy and ability to see the bigger picture. For those building a career in clinical research, my advice is to stay curious and keep challenging yourself. Every protocol, challenge and interaction is an opportunity to learn. Over time, these experiences build your knowledge and expertise. But when your basket is full, remember to share what you've learned with others. A career in clinical research is not just about how much you know, but how willing you are to learn, adapt and give back to the people and industry around you.



'Atirah and her team



Nurul Farhana Zulkifli (Clinical Research Patient Recruitment Specialist)

Patient recruitment plays a crucial role in clinical trials — what does your role involve behind the scenes?

My role is basically to support recruitment-related activities, ensuring the patient recruitment target for each trial is achieved. I oversee all recruitment activities at site level and provide additional support to sites that need extra attention, focusing on effective strategies or initiatives to improve patient recruitment for the targeted study. On top of that, continuous engagement with other departments is needed to ensure a collaborative effort with patient advocacy groups and public outreach programs (such as I AM AWARE) to promote and increase awareness of clinical trials among patients as well as the public. This helps expand the potential pool of patients for participation in clinical trials. My role also requires me to lead recruitment discussions with relevant stakeholders as well as the study team, to ensure any challenges are addressed promptly so that all studies enrol the targeted number of subjects within the given timeframe.

What happens behind the scenes before a patient joins a clinical trial?

Before a patient ever signs up, there's a lot of groundwork happening, identifying the right sites, working with investigators to understand the study criteria, and building outreach strategies that reach the right patient population. Specifically for my role, I coordinate with the Feasibility team to make sure that trials coming to a site, or to Malaysia as a whole, are directed to potential sites that will be ready to recruit eligible patients. This includes assessing the target number as well as the potential pool of patients that need to be evaluated prior to site selection or activation. This helps ensure that once a trial is activated, we can avoid potential issues related to patient pool availability or other challenges further down the line at the site. Even so, once recruitment is activated at a site, we need to track enrolment progress against targets and troubleshoot when recruitment is slower than expected. It's a mix of planning, problem-solving, and constant communication long before a patient walks through the door.

What is one thing you wish more people knew about clinical research and the opportunities it can provide?

I wish more people knew that participating in a clinical trial isn't just about contributing to future medicine, it can also mean access to new treatment options, closer monitoring by a dedicated care team, and being part of a process that's

rigorously designed to protect participant safety. There's often a misconception that trials are a last resort or purely experimental risk, when they're carefully regulated and can be a meaningful option at many stages of a patient's care journey.

What's the most fulfilling part of your job that people may not see?

It's seeing a trial reach its enrolment target and knowing that behind every number is a real person who chose to be part of something bigger than themselves. People don't always see the months of coordination, the relationship-building with sites, the small adjustments that add up. When it comes together, there's a quiet sense of fulfilment knowing that work translated into real patients getting access to potentially life-changing research

What's your favourite part about being the "connection point" between patients and research teams?

Being the connection, or bridge, that makes complex research feel more human and accessible. Study teams are focused on engaging with patients and investigators at the site level, while patients are mostly focused on their health and the treatment options available to them. There's something really rewarding about knowing that the work I do behind the scenes helps someone find a trial that could make a real difference in their life.



Farhana and ClinOps HQ team

CRM IN PHOTOS



CRM met with Daiichi Sankyo team for a productive discussion on clinical research operations and opportunities to enhance patient recruitment strategies.

3
Jul



CRM met with Johnson & Johnson to explore Malaysia's potential in immunology trials, focusing on site readiness, patient recruitment and future studies.

17
Jul



CRM connected with HelloDoktor to exchange perspectives on raising public awareness of clinical research and exploring future collaboration.

28
Jul



CRM met Institute of Bioscience, UPM discussion togetherwith Chinese delegates, exchanging insights on Malaysia's clinical research ecosystem and exploring TCM collaboration opportunities.

4
Aug



CRM engaged with ISENS Biosensors Malaysia to explore clinical research opportunities in CGM systems and strengthen local evidence for diabetes management.

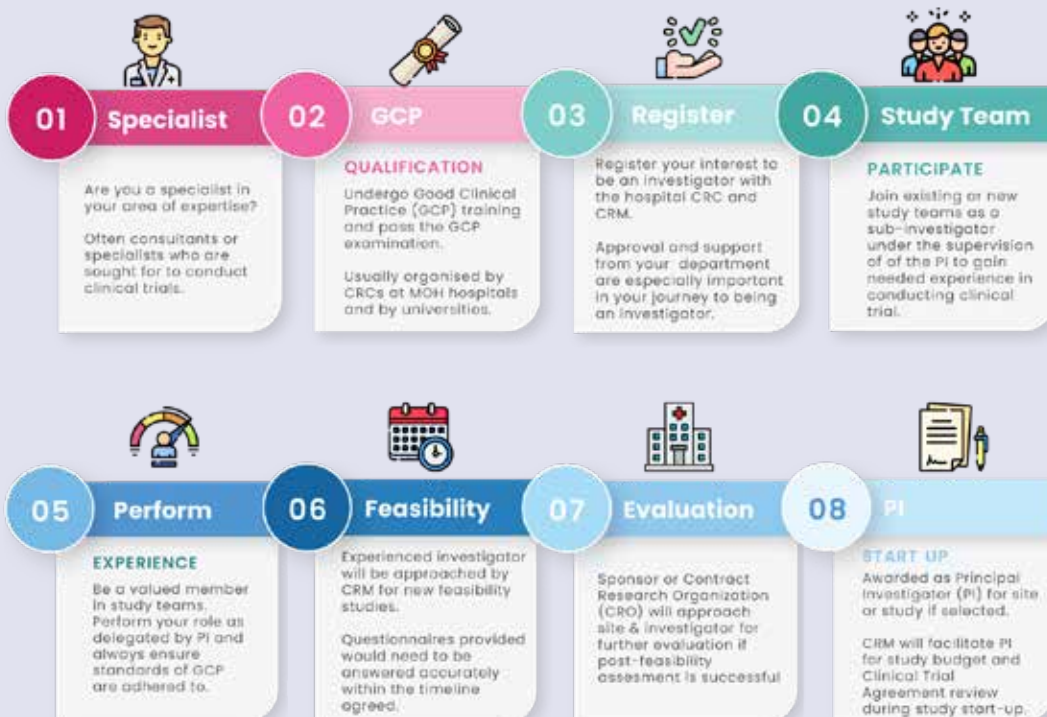
4
Aug



CRM met with Dr Muhammad Fairuz Shah Abd Karim (UiTM) and ANZUP representatives to explore clinical research collaboration opportunities.

4
Aug

Roadmap to Becoming an Investigator



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