

## ROSE Foundation Wins Prestigious Global Award for Cervical Cancer Elimination



From left: Choo Yit Lee, CEO; Yam Mun Li, operations director; Professor Marion Saville, trustee; Professor Dr. Woo Yin Ling, founding trustee & medical technical advisor; Professor Dato' Dr. Adeeba Kamarulzaman, chairman.

ROSE Foundation, the home-grown NGO dedicated to the elimination of cervical cancer, has been distinguished as the first Asian integrated clinical care team to win one of the top three global awards under the prestigious UNIVANTS of Healthcare Excellence programme.

UNIVANTS was established in 2018 to inspire and recognise those who achieve meaningful impact and exceptional outcomes for patients, communities, healthcare professionals, and the environment.

Its founding and current partners include the IFCC (International Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine); AACC (formerly American Association for Clinical Chemistry); EHMA (European Health Management Association); HIMSS (Modern Healthcare, Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society); NAHQ (National Association of Healthcare Quality); IHE (Institute of Health Economics); and Abbott Laboratories.

According to ROSE Foundation Chairperson, Professor Dato' Dr Adeeba Kamarulzaman, ROSE proudly takes its place today alongside more than 60 integrated clinical care teams worldwide that have demonstrated high impact achievements.

These range from problem solving with an innovative approach, to driving the transformation of healthcare delivery with measurable impact on patients, clinicians, and entire health systems.

Dr Adeeba said: "The award encourages us to further scale and expand the use of high-impact health technology to empower vulnerable women, particularly those in underserved and underprivileged communities, in the fight against cervical cancer."

In Malaysia, cervical cancer is the second most common cancer among women under 45 years of age. In this context, comprehensive screening becomes very critical in the overall goal of achieving cervical cancer elimination.

It enables early diagnosis and timely treatment which substantially increases the possibility of cure.

ROSE Foundation Trustee, Professor Dr Woo Yin Ling, remarked: "Program ROSE incorporates HPV testing by self-sampling, which is more accurate than the conventional pap smear. ROSE also ensures that women who are HPV-detected are guided and navigated to care.

"Clearly, to achieve cervical cancer elimination, HPV testing and proper follow-up is key. Thus, as our name suggests, Program ROSE was established with the aim of Removing Obstacles to cervical screening.

"The key innovation we bring is not just HPV testing using a self-sampling swab. We take

great pains in ensuring that women understand what the test means and ensure that they are assisted to the closest hospital for further investigation if it is required. This really is central to Program ROSE."

According to Dr Woo, the second innovation in Program ROSE is integrating the use of mobile devices with a secure digital e-health platform for registration and data collection.

This facilitates communication and linkage to care while smoothly navigating the women through an otherwise complex healthcare system.

She added that the pursuit of its mission leads Program ROSE to continue emphasising education, stakeholder engagement, informed decision-making, and policy-shaping for under-screened Malaysian women, particularly at the point of care.

Program ROSE has made remarkable progress in enhancing healthcare access and cervical cancer outcomes for many women in Malaysia. Since its inception in 2019 to date, Program ROSE has screened more than 23,000 women with a greater than 92.5% linkage-to-care rate for those found positive for HPV.

Nearly 200 women have been identified and treated for pre-cancer and early cancer.

The official UNIVANTS of Healthcare Excellence award presentation ceremony will be held on August 11, 2023.