

UMS to host International Neuroscience Symposium

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KOTA KINABALU: The human brain, given its complexity, is yet to be fully understood by scientists the world over.

Towards this end, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), in its bid to become a research university, will for the first time gather experts to share their knowledge on the topic in a three-day International Neuroscience Symposium 2012.



Dr Perumal

"A total of 15 plenary lectures by neuroscientists, ranging from basic scientists to clinicians, will share their knowledge with the symposium participants.

"The invited speakers are from Florey Neurosciences Institute from Melbourne, Australia, Gunma University, Japan, Brain Research Institute, Monash Kuala Lumpur, Universiti Malaya, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Universiti Putra Malaysia, University of Nottingham (Malaysia campus), Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman and UMS," said Organising Chairman Prof. Dr Perumal Ramasamy, Saturday.

The symposium, themed "Trends in Neuroscience: Bench-to-bedside-translation of Basic Science Findings to clinical practice" will be held at the UMS School of Medicine and is expected to cover topics from genes, behaviour and neurological disorders.

He said the symposium would also provide insights on related diseases such as alzheimer, autism, schizophrenia, epilepsy, dyslexia and others, which relate to brain development, and will feature prominent scientists such as Prof. Dr Ishwar Parhar from Pakistan.

"It is important for us to understand neuroscience and its diseases related to genetics, environment and nutrition. And perhaps remedy through intervention," said Dr Perumal.

Chipped in Prof. Dr Muhd Salih Falah: "Currently, scientists have only discovered about 50 per cent of the functions of the brain. It is not just electrical wires but also involves chemicals and hormones.

"This is something still intensively investigated that affects behaviour and emotion."

The symposium will also help improve understanding on mental illness, which is one big issue now, added Dr Muhd Salih, who sits in the Scientific Committee for the symposium.

The symposium, funded by the university, is in collaboration with the Brain Research Institute Monash Sunway and Neuro Malaysia Society, and also gathered funds and support from some South Korean non-governmental organisations.

School of Medicine Acting Dean, Prof. Dr D Kamarudin D Mudin, meanwhile, hoped the symposium will spur the development of neuroscience and woo more individuals to embark on research activities using the facilities available in UMS.

"We have enough grants and facility to start up research in the areas of neuroscience, and through this symposium, we hope to introduce this region and more people would recognise Malaysia as a nation that encourages such activities," he said.

The symposium is also open to the public for a fee.