

# Taipei Veterans General Hospital and National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University initiate a P3 laboratory to promote collaboration projects for COVID-19 prevention and treatment

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In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University (NYCU) and Taipei Veterans General Hospital (TVGH) established a COVID-19 research alliance on February 6, 2020, to jointly research and develop rapid test kits, antiviral drugs, and vaccines. A key facility overseeing relevant research and development projects is the Biosafety Level 3 (P3) laboratory constructed on the 10th floor of the health technology building of TVGH. The laboratory received approval from the Centers for Disease Control of Taiwan on December 23, 2022, for conducting SARS-CoV-2 research. On January 12, an initiation ceremony for the P3 laboratory was held under the witness of Prof. Wu-Ju Shieh, a former expert in the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and receiver of the Order of Brilliant Star.



Wei-Ming Chen, the superintendent of TVGH, stated that in the face of public health challenges caused by emergent viruses and pathogenic bacteria, Taiwan must maintain the operation of certified P3 laboratories with adequate safety and protection measures to enable research on highly dangerous pathogens. In response to national policy, TVGH has renovated its P3 laboratory on the 10th floor of the health technology building. The hospital received assistance from various individuals during the renovation process and would like to express its gratitude to the consultation council for providing grants to support the renovation, and to Samuel Yen-Liang Yin, the chairman of the Ruentex Financial Group, for providing monetary and technical supports. The aforementioned resources enable the laboratory to meet the strict standards specified in the latest version of the SARS-CoV-2 laboratory biosafety guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control. In addition, the P4 team of Institute of Preventive Medicine of the National Defense Medical Center has visited TVGH multiple times to assist in the training of seed instructors.

Chen also expressed his gratitude to the P3 laboratory of Linkou Chang Gung Memorial Hospital, National Taiwan University Microbial Genomics Core Lab, and P3 laboratory and National Institute of Infectious Disease and Vaccinology of National Health Research Institutes for sharing practical experiences regarding the operation of P3 laboratories. NYCU has laid a strong foundation for SARS-CoV-2 research and looks forward to collaborating with TVGH by utilizing the P3 laboratory as an innovative research and development platform to promote relevant research. This in turn enhances research on the standard of emergent and high-risk infectious diseases in Taiwan.



Chi-Hung Lin, President of NYCU, stated that the initiation ceremony for the P3 laboratory signifies a milestone for research teams in TVGH and NYCU. The laboratory is established through the efforts of the research teams under the public's expectation. Following the gradual lifting of various pandemic prevention measures, learning to coexist with the virus and gaining further understanding of the COVID-19 pandemic from a scientific perspective remain highly essential. The P3 laboratory will greatly enhance the research capacity of the research teams, which already possess solid research foundations. Lin hoped that the initiation of the laboratory will produce more results that can contribute to scientific research and disease prevention.

Hsu-Sung Kuo, former director-general of the Centers for Disease Control and current ambassador-at-large of Taiwan, stated that the current pandemic has prompted the government, society, and academia to pay more attention to P3 laboratories and provided an opportunity for Taiwan to enhance its research capacity. In the past, P3 laboratories and various other pandemic prevention supplies were largely overlooked when Taiwan was not affected by pandemics. However, the sudden emergence of a pandemic would lead to severe outcomes due to the lack of preparation. Considering that Taiwan has viewed pandemic control as military operations, sustainable management of relevant supplies is highly crucial. Kuo asserted that research teams from TVGH and NYCU will adequately utilize the P3 laboratory and fulfill the public's expectation.

