

Message from the Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Health)



It is my great pleasure to welcome our distinguished speakers and all participants to the Health Research Symposium 2019.

The Government is committed to building a healthy society for all. The results obtained from the Government's continuing investment in visionary health and medical research play an important role in informing our health policies.

In the past two years, the Health and Medical Research Fund (HMRF) has attracted a large number of investigator-initiated research and health promotion proposals from local universities and medical experts on a wide range of topics including management of major non-communicable diseases, modification of lifestyle risk factors (i.e. smoking, alcohol drinking, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity), mental health, injury prevention, primary care, control of emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases, palliative and end-of-life care, and Chinese medicine. The HMRF has supported an annual average of 195 investigator-initiated proposals, worth \$215 million in the past two years.

Apart from investigator-initiated research and health promotion projects, the HMRF has commissioned a range of research programmes to address health issues of local relevance. A notable example is the study on cost-benefit analysis of the 9-valent human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine. The research has provided solid evidence to support the Government's decision, as announced in the 2018 Policy Address, that starting from the 2019/20 school year, free HPV vaccination will be introduced to school girls of particular age groups as a public health strategy for prevention of cervical cancer. Other commissioned programmes address important health issues such as projection of manpower need of healthcare professionals in Hong Kong, assessing the risk of breast cancer for local Chinese women, and evaluation of the Government's pilot colorectal cancer screening programme.

The Symposium this year will again showcase the rich knowledge generated from the funded research projects. In addition, the recipients of the first batch of HMRF Research Fellowships awarded in 2015/16 will share their experience of training and how they have applied their new skills in the public healthcare setting. We look forward to nurturing more young talents to tackle future challenges in health care.

With the Government's unfailing support under the HMRF and on other fronts, I very much hope our research community will continue to excel and contribute to the well-being of our society.

I wish all participants an insightful experience at this Symposium that would enlighten you in the pursuit of research excellence in the years ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth Tse'.

Ms Elizabeth TSE, JP
Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Health)
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region