

Bernama.com
Malaysian National News Agency

Malaysia, Cuba In Biotechnology Link-up
General
May 29, 2007 17:36 PM

KUALA LUMPUR, May 29 (Bernama) -- Biotechnology has become an important field of cooperation between Malaysia and Cuba as it allows them to develop new technologies and vaccines, a Cuban molecular biologist said Tuesday.

Dr Cristina Mateo de Acosta from Cuba's Centre for Molecular Immunology (CMI) said the collaboration should be enhanced to take advantage of advancements in biotechnology in her country which were of the highest quality.

She is here on a six-week attachment at Inno Biologics Sdn Bhd (InnoBio) in Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, where she will train Malaysian scientists in molecular biology techniques and antibody humanisation against cancer.

"The relationship between our centre and this company is a good start as it can help Malaysia to become a biotechnology hub soon," she told Bernama in an interview here.

She said this kind of partnership could pave the way for Malaysia to develop new monoclonal antibody products.

"I think that Cuba can help a lot of people in Asia to get a better treatment for cancer," she added.

CIMAB, the commercial arm of CMI, has licensed the antibody humanisation technology to InnoBio, a company owned by Ministry of Finance Incorporated.

Dr Mateo de Acosta said Cuban regulatory agencies had approved monoclonal antibodies for the treatment of head and neck cancer. A two-year clinical trial is currently underway.

She said that initial results were encouraging as there was a difference between patients treated with conventional chemotherapy and those receiving a combination of chemotherapy and monoclonal antibodies.

"This clinical trial is also being done in China, India, Canada and Germany. We try to treat patients with the antibody but it's better if it we combine it with chemotherapy," she added.

-- BERNAMA