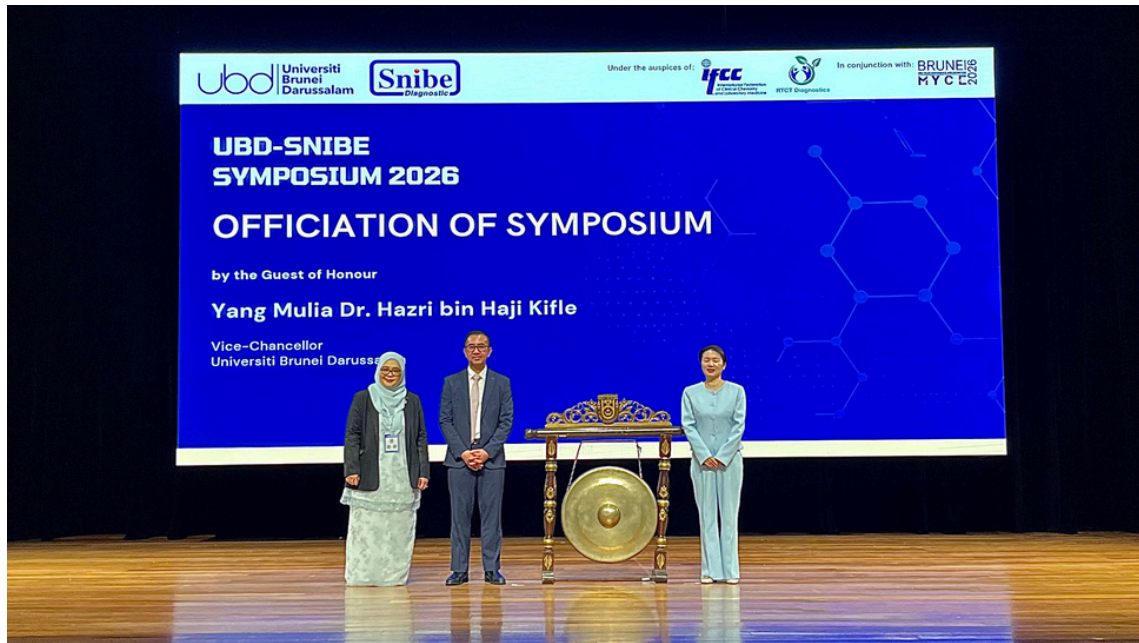


BEYOND

APRIL TO JUNE 2026 | ISSUE 44

PAPRSB Institute of Health Sciences, Universiti Brunei Darussalam
Quarterly Newsletter



The UBD-SNIBE Symposium 2026 brought together distinguished local and international experts to explore the latest developments in laboratory medicine and clinical diagnostics. Officiated by the Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Brunei Darussalam, the symposium underscored UBD's commitment to advancing healthcare innovation, research collaboration, and global academic partnerships.
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PAPRSB IHS HOSTED UBD-SNIBE SYMPOSIUM 2026

Dr Liyana binti Hj Ahmad

Pengiran Anak Puteri Rashidah Sa'adatul Bolkiah Institute of Health Sciences (PAPRSB IHS), Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD), in collaboration with Shenzhen New Industries Biomedical Engineering Co. Ltd. (SNIBE), successfully hosted the UBD-SNIBE Symposium 2026 from 20-21 June 2026 at the Pro-Chancellor Arts Centre, UBD.

Held under the theme "Advances in Clinical Chemistry and Immunoassay Technologies," the symposium brought together more than 100 participants, including researchers, clinicians, laboratory professionals, academics, students, and industry representatives from Brunei Darussalam and the wider region. The event was organised under the auspices of the International Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (IFCC), supported by RTCT Diagnostics, and held in conjunction with the Brunei Mid-Year Conference and Exhibition (Brunei MYCE 2026).

The symposium marked the first major scientific event jointly organised by UBD and SNIBE following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2025. The partnership reflects a shared commitment to advancing biomedical diagnostics through collaborative research, academic exchange, professional training, and capacity building.

The symposium was officially officiated by the Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Yang Mulia Dr. Hazri bin Haji Kifle, underscoring UBD's commitment to strengthening international collaborations and promoting excellence in healthcare research, innovation, and education.

The two-day programme featured three plenary sessions, a panel discussion, a technology spotlight session, and a poster pitch competition. Internationally renowned experts shared the latest developments in clinical chemistry, immunoassay technologies, laboratory automation, biomarker discovery, quality assurance, and diagnostic approaches for non-communicable diseases. Discussions also explored the translation of emerging diagnostic innovations into clinical practice, laboratory quality standards, and workforce development, providing valuable insights into the evolving landscape of laboratory medicine.

A highlight of the symposium was the poster pitch session, which provided an opportunity for students and early-career researchers to showcase their research and engage with experts from academia and industry. The competition concluded with Nur Izzah binti Bungsu, a PhD candidate in Biomedical Sciences at PAPRSB IHS, receiving the Best Poster Award. Dr. Hj Nur Atiqah binti Hj Suhaili, Research Assistant at the Institute for Biodiversity and Environmental Research (IBER), UBD, was awarded second place, while Amira Asyiqin binti Abdul Wahab, a Master of Health Sciences (Biomedical Science) student at PAPRSB IHS, received third place.

The UBD-SNIBE Symposium 2026 served as an important platform for knowledge exchange, interdisciplinary collaboration, and engagement between academia and industry. By bringing together experts from diverse fields, the symposium reinforced UBD's role in advancing laboratory medicine and diagnostic sciences while strengthening international partnerships that will support future collaborations in research, education, professional development, and healthcare innovation.



Left: A panel of experts explored "Translating Diagnostic Innovation into Clinical Impact," moderated by Dr. Hajah Surita binti Haji Mohamad Taib, President of BAMLS. **Right:** A group photo of the organising committee, speakers, student volunteers, and participants of the UBD-SNIBE Symposium 2026.

MEDICAL STUDENTS PRESENT RESEARCH AT INTERNATIONAL GERIATRIC MEDICINE CONFERENCE

Abdul Hafiz bin Alwi and Adam Cheong Jun Yee (Cohort 20, BHSc Medicine)

Two third-year medical students from the PAPRSB Institute of Health Sciences (PAPRSB IHS), Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD), Abdul Hafiz bin Alwi and Adam Cheong Jun Yee, represented the University at the 8th Annual Malaysian Congress of Geriatric Medicine (MCGM 2026) held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 9-11 July 2026. The students delivered oral poster presentations highlighting findings from their undergraduate research projects.

Conducted as part of the Special Study Module 2 (SSM2), a core component of the Bachelor of Health Sciences (Medicine) programme, both studies focused on improving the health and well-being of older adults attending the Geriatric Outpatient Clinic in Brunei Darussalam.

Hafiz presented his study, "Medication Knowledge and Factors Affecting Adherence Rates in Older Adults Attending Geriatric Outpatient Clinics in Brunei Darussalam." His findings revealed that while most participants had limited knowledge of their medications, adherence levels were generally moderate. Better medication adherence was associated with greater understanding of prescribed medicines, confidence in communicating with healthcare professionals, and the ability to self-manage treatment. Common barriers included forgetfulness, changes in daily routine, and medication-related concerns, highlighting the need for practical, patient-centred interventions to support medication management among older adults.

Adam presented his research, "Correlation of Muscle Mass Metrics Using Bioelectrical Impedance Analysis (BIA) with Physical Performance Measures in Geriatric Outpatients." His study demonstrated that handgrip strength showed the strongest correlation with muscle mass measured by BIA, while balance was not significantly associated. The findings support the use of BIA as a practical screening tool for the early detection of sarcopenia risk and its integration into routine geriatric assessments at RIPAS Hospital.

Participation in MCGM 2026 provided the students with a valuable opportunity to present research from Brunei Darussalam to an international audience while engaging with healthcare professionals, researchers, and students from across the region. They were accompanied by their clinical supervisor, Dr Tan Chia Wei, Consultant Geriatrician at RIPAS Hospital.

Both students expressed their sincere appreciation to their academic and clinical supervisors for their invaluable guidance and mentorship throughout their research projects. They also acknowledged the geriatric healthcare teams at RIPAS Hospital and Subok Health Centre, as well as all study participants, whose support and contributions made the studies possible.



PAPRSB IHS DELEGATION EXPLORES HERBAL MEDICINE INNOVATIONS AT SYMPOSIUM 2026, MALAYSIA

Dr Muhammad Hazim Bin Hj Abdul Ghani



Dr Hazim Ghani, Dr Goh Poh Hui, Dr May Goh, and Dr Atiqah Suhaili, together with MHSc students Amira Asyiqin, Norna Beel, and Amal Umami Naqibah, participated in the Herbal Medicine Symposium 2026 held on 7-8 April 2026 at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Auditorium, Setia Alam, Malaysia.

The symposium, themed “Advancing Science, Innovation and Future Global Market Access,” brought together international and local experts from academia, research institutions, industry, and government agencies to explore the evolving landscape of herbal medicine and its integration with modern biomedical research.

Over the two-day programme, participants gained valuable insights into the latest advancements in herbal medicine research, product development, innovation, and global commercialisation strategies. Key discussions highlighted the application of reverse pharmacology in translating traditional herbal knowledge into evidence-based therapeutics, as well as the growing contributions of systems biology, network pharmacology, and natural products research in advancing modern drug discovery.

Other sessions focused on Malaysia’s herbal industry development roadmap, regulatory pathways for herbal product registration, quality assurance frameworks, and approaches to enhance the translation of research discoveries into commercially viable products. Emerging technologies, including nanoformulation strategies to improve the stability, bioavailability, and targeted delivery of plant-derived bioactive compounds, were also featured.

The symposium served as a valuable platform for knowledge exchange, allowing participants to enhance their understanding of current trends in herbal medicine research, regulatory and commercialisation pathways, and opportunities for regional collaboration. The event also strengthened networking opportunities and highlighted the importance of multidisciplinary partnerships in advancing evidence-based herbal medicine innovation.

IGNITING INNOVATION AND CONNECTIVITY: IHS GRADCONNECT 2026

Amal Ummi Naqibah Binti Md Zain, Nor Amal Hazirah Binti Hassan and Dr Siti Rohaiza Binti Ahmad

The PAPRSB Institute of Health Sciences (IHS), Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD), successfully hosted IHS GradCONNECT 2026, a premier graduate research event aimed at showcasing innovation, strengthening research engagement, and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration. Formerly known as Graduate Research Day, the event was rebranded to emphasise connectivity and impactful research exchange. Held under the theme “Igniting Innovation: Research for a Better Future,” the two-day programme highlighted the importance of academic inquiry and collaboration in addressing contemporary global healthcare challenges.

The event commenced with an opening address by the Dean of IHS, Professor Dr Kenneth Kok Yuh Yen, who emphasised the importance of cross-disciplinary partnerships and innovation in advancing scientific knowledge and improving community health outcomes. A keynote address by Dr Erkin Erdal from the University of Oxford explored the transformative potential of innovation at the intersection of medicine, advanced imaging, and machine learning, providing graduate students with insights into the future of health technology.

The programme continued with a Coffee Talk session by Dr Hjh Asmah Husaini titled “Architecting Your Future: Why Thinking Differently is a Graduate’s Superpower.” The session encouraged graduates to embrace creative thinking, develop unique perspectives, and prepare for future challenges in their professional journeys.

IHS GradCONNECT 2026 featured a diverse range of oral and poster presentations, allowing graduate students to share their latest research findings with peers and faculty members. A key highlight was the Three Minute Thesis (3MT) competition, which challenged participants to communicate complex postgraduate research in a concise and engaging three-minute presentation for non-specialist audiences.

The event also provided valuable networking opportunities, enabling participants from different health science disciplines to exchange ideas, receive constructive feedback, and explore potential research collaborations and mentorship opportunities. Organised by the IHS GradCONNECT committee, the event demonstrated the creativity, dedication, and research excellence of IHS graduate students.

The success of IHS GradCONNECT 2026 was made possible through the generous support of sponsors, industry partners, and student volunteers, whose contributions provided essential resources and logistical support for the smooth delivery of the event. Their collective support also contributed to strengthening the research community within Brunei.

The event’s media coverage was coordinated by the IHS Student Council volunteer team, further contributing to the visibility and reach of the event. Through the collective efforts of the organising committee, sponsors, industry partners, and volunteers, IHS GradCONNECT 2026 successfully provided a platform for academic exchange, collaboration, networking, and inspiration among the next generation of health science researchers.



BRIDGING SCIENCE, CULTURE AND CUISINE: PAPRSB IHS REPRESENTS BRUNEI AT PHARMTABLE ASEAN 2026

Dr May Goh Poh Yik

From 19-25 May 2026, Dr May Goh Poh Yik from the Pharmacy (Herbal) Programme, PAPRSB Institute of Health Sciences (IHS), Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD), represented Brunei Darussalam as the Scholar Representative at Pharmtable: The Future Culinary of ASEAN held in Chanthaburi Province and Bangkok, Thailand.

Organised by Thailand's Ministry of Culture, the programme brought together scholars, chefs, and experts from across ASEAN to explore the role of traditional herbs, spices, and culinary heritage in promoting health and well-being. Dr May delivered a presentation highlighting Brunei's medicinal plant heritage and the potential of local herbs and spices in functional foods and preventive healthcare, while participating in knowledge exchange sessions that encouraged future regional research collaborations.

As part of the programme's gastronomic research and development activities, Dr May collaborated with Brunei Chef Representative Ms Siti Nurhanimah binti Zakaria from Royal Brunei Culinary and chefs from Rambhai Barni Rajabhat University (RBRU) to create a contemporary interpretation of the traditional Bruneian dish ikan rebus asam sira. The Brunei-Thailand fusion dish incorporated Brunei cherry (asam aur-aur) and Thai salak (snake fruit), demonstrating the integration of scientific knowledge, local ingredients, and culinary innovation.

The dish received enthusiastic public response during the showcase, with an additional 60 servings prepared beyond the initial 100 samples to meet demand. The programme strengthened ASEAN partnerships and highlighted the importance of evidence-based validation of traditional knowledge, interdisciplinary collaboration, community engagement, and sustainable gastronomy in preserving cultural heritage.

Dr May's participation also provided valuable insights that will support future teaching, research, outreach activities, and regional collaborations at IHS, further demonstrating the role of health sciences in bridging traditional practices with modern scientific approaches.



FACULTY DEVELOPMENT TRAINING HIGHLIGHTS THE ROLE OF HEALTH ECONOMICS IN EVIDENCE-INFORMED POLICY

Dr Amrizal Muhammad Nur

The PAPRSB Institute of Health Sciences (IHS), Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD), successfully organised its 6th Faculty Development Training on 3 June 2026, featuring a session entitled “Health Economic Research Leading to Health Policy: Bridging Evidence and Action.” The session was facilitated by Associate Professor Dr Amrizal Muhammad Nur, Associate Professor of Health Economics, and brought together IHS academic staff to explore the importance of health economics in strengthening healthcare decision-making and policy development.

The training aimed to enhance participants’ understanding of how health economic research can support evidence-informed decisions and contribute towards the development of healthcare systems that are more efficient, equitable, and sustainable. The session highlighted the growing importance of integrating economic evidence into healthcare planning, particularly in an era of increasing healthcare demands, limited resources, and the need for prioritisation of interventions that deliver meaningful health outcomes.

During the session, participants were introduced to fundamental concepts in health economics, including scarcity, priority setting, opportunity cost, economic evaluation methods, budget impact analysis, and Health Technology Assessment (HTA). These concepts provided a foundation for understanding how healthcare resources can be assessed and allocated to maximise benefits for individuals and communities.

The session incorporated practical policy examples and an interactive case study focusing on a diabetes prevention programme. Through this activity, participants explored the process of translating research findings into policy recommendations by considering multiple factors, including clinical effectiveness, healthcare costs, affordability, equity, and the feasibility of implementation within real-world healthcare settings.

A key message from the training was that health economic research extends beyond measuring costs. Instead, it provides a structured framework for evaluating the value of healthcare interventions by comparing available options and supporting transparent, accountable, and evidence-based resource allocation. The application of health economics enables policymakers and healthcare professionals to make informed choices that balance clinical benefits, financial sustainability, and population health needs.

The training also emphasised the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration in addressing complex healthcare challenges. By strengthening participants’ capacity to interpret, evaluate, and communicate economic evidence, the session contributed to building institutional expertise in health policy research and translation.

Through initiatives such as the Faculty Development Training series, IHS continues to support continuous professional development among academic staff and promote a culture of lifelong learning, research excellence, and innovation. The 6th Faculty Development Training further reinforces IHS’s commitment to advancing evidence-informed policymaking and supporting sustainable health system development in Brunei Darussalam and the wider region.



HANDS-ON WORKSHOP STRENGTHENS CAPACITY IN ANTIMICROBIAL SUSCEPTIBILITY TESTING

Dr Siti Hanna Muharram



The PAPRSB Institute of Health Sciences (IHS), Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD), successfully conducted its 5th Faculty Development Training Workshop, entitled "Mastering Antimicrobial Susceptibility Testing (AST): Agar Well Diffusion Assay (AWD), Disc Diffusion Assay and Minimum Inhibitory Concentration (MIC)", on 25–26 May 2026. The workshop brought together 28 participants from academia and government agencies, reflecting IHS's commitment to advancing professional development, research excellence, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Organised as part of the IHS Faculty Development Training series, the workshop aims to equip academic staff and researchers with contemporary research methodologies, practical laboratory skills, and innovative approaches that support excellence in teaching, learning, and scientific research.

Participants included lecturers from the Faculty of Science (FOS), PAPRSB Institute of Health Sciences (IHS), and the Faculty of Integrated Technologies (FIT), as well as final-year undergraduate and postgraduate students from FOS and IHS. Representatives from the Veterinary Laboratory Services, Department of Agriculture and Agrifood, Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism (MPRT), also participated, creating a multidisciplinary learning environment that encouraged collaboration across the human, animal, and environmental health sectors.

The workshop focused on strengthening participants' knowledge and practical competencies in antimicrobial susceptibility testing (AST), a key laboratory approach for monitoring antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and supporting evidence-based antimicrobial use. Through a combination of interactive lectures and intensive laboratory practical sessions, participants were introduced to widely used AST methodologies, including the Kirby-Bauer disc diffusion assay, agar well diffusion assay (AWD), and the determination of Minimum Inhibitory Concentration (MIC). Participants gained valuable hands-on experience in performing these techniques, analysing laboratory findings, and interpreting AST results using internationally recognised principles.

Beyond technical training, the workshop provided an important platform for interdisciplinary knowledge exchange among participants from academia, research institutions, and government agencies. Discussions highlighted the growing global challenge of antimicrobial resistance and the importance of collaborative approaches to surveillance, research, and antimicrobial stewardship.

By strengthening laboratory capacity and fostering partnerships across multiple disciplines, the workshop reinforced the One Health approach, recognising the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health. The programme further reflects IHS's commitment to supporting capacity building, promoting research excellence, and contributing to national and regional efforts to address antimicrobial resistance through education, collaboration, and evidence-based research.

PAPRSB IHS TEAM CROWNED OVERALL CHAMPION AT AI READY ASEAN YOUTH CHALLENGE 2026

Ummi Salwa Suhaime and Dr Hein Minn Tun @ Salman



Team ΣHAI, comprising Dr Hein Minn Tun (@Salman) and Ummi Salwa Suhaime, both doctoral candidates in the Digital Public Health Programme at the PAPRSB Institute of Health Sciences (IHS), Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD), emerged as the Overall Champion of the inaugural AI Ready ASEAN Youth Challenge 2026, outperforming more than 600 submissions from across ASEAN.

The team's winning project, Sahabat-Care, is an AI-powered dementia care platform designed to support patients, caregivers, and healthcare professionals through a unified care ecosystem featuring bilingual 24/7 large language model (LLM) chatbots, a multimodal video and audio early-warning system, and structured clinical summaries. Inspired by real-world community needs, the project demonstrates how AI can be harnessed to improve patient-centred dementia care.

Team ΣHAI's innovation and commitment earned them the competition's highest honour, with the award presented by His Excellency Tharman Shanmugaratnam, President of the Republic of Singapore. The competition also provided valuable opportunities to engage with fellow innovators across ASEAN and exchange ideas on responsible AI solutions for healthcare.

This achievement highlights IHS's growing contribution to digital health innovation and reflects its commitment to developing practical, research-driven solutions that address real-world healthcare challenges. Team ΣHAI hopes their success will inspire more young people to pursue innovative ideas and collaborative solutions that create a positive impact on society.



NURSING PROGRAMME ADVANCES GLOBAL HEALTH ENGAGEMENT

Dr Agong Lupat

The Nursing Programme of the PAPRSB Institute of Health Sciences (IHS), Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD), participated as a co-host in the international conference “Leadership for Global Health: Advancing Nursing and Health Care Systems,” held from 8-9 June 2026 at the Grand Richmond Stylish Convention Hotel, Nonthaburi, Thailand.

The conference served as a significant platform for knowledge exchange and professional engagement, bringing together nursing educators, researchers, clinicians, healthcare leaders, and policymakers from ASEAN and other international institutions. Through keynote presentations, discussions, and networking activities, participants explored the evolving landscape of global healthcare and the critical role of nursing leadership in strengthening health systems.

Key themes addressed during the conference included global health leadership, digital healthcare transformation, nursing workforce development, curriculum advancement, and evidence-based healthcare practices. Discussions highlighted the importance of preparing future healthcare professionals with the knowledge, skills, and leadership capabilities required to respond effectively to emerging healthcare challenges, including technological advancement, changing population needs, and the increasing complexity of healthcare delivery.

Participation in the conference provided the Nursing Programme with valuable opportunities to strengthen international academic and professional networks while exploring potential collaborations in interdisciplinary research, staff and student mobility, academic exchange, and capacity-building initiatives. The engagement also enabled participants to gain insights into innovative approaches in nursing education and healthcare practice that can contribute towards continuous improvement in teaching, learning, and research activities.

The conference further supported the professional development of participating representatives by providing exposure to diverse perspectives and international best practices in nursing and healthcare leadership. These experiences align with IHS’s ongoing commitment to enhancing nursing education, strengthening research capacity, and promoting excellence in healthcare practice through global collaboration and knowledge sharing.

The participation also contributed to enhancing UBD’s international visibility and reaffirmed its commitment to supporting sustainable and innovative healthcare systems in Brunei Darussalam and the wider ASEAN region. By actively engaging in regional and international platforms, the Nursing Programme continues to strengthen its role in advancing nursing education, research, and healthcare development.

The programme concluded with a Gala, Tribute and Celebration Dinner held in honour of Associate Professor Tassana Boontong, recognising her outstanding contributions and dedication to the advancement of nursing in Thailand. The celebration also provided an opportunity for participants to reflect on the achievements of the nursing profession and the importance of continued collaboration in shaping the future of healthcare.



Top: Representatives from PAPRSB IHS at the conference: Dr Sharimawati Sharbini, Dr Agong Lupat, and Dr Khadizah Mumin.

Bottom: Dr Agong with Associate Professor Ameporn Ratinthorn, Dean of the Faculty of Nursing, Mahidol University, during the international conference.

STRENGTHENING COMPETENCY IN LABORATORY ANIMAL HANDLING THROUGH PRACTICAL SKILLS TRAINING

Dr Jestin Chellian



The PAPRSB Institute of Health Sciences (IHS), Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD), successfully conducted the 3rd Faculty Development Training Workshop, entitled "Laboratory Animal Handling Competency: A Practical Skills Workshop," to strengthen the practical, technical, and ethical competencies required for high-quality preclinical research involving laboratory rodents. The workshop was facilitated by Dr Jestin Chellian, Assistant Professor of Pharmacology, and delivered through two intensive half-day training sessions.

Organised as part of the IHS Faculty Development Training series, the workshop aimed to enhance participants' knowledge and practical skills in laboratory animal handling while promoting the highest standards of animal welfare and research integrity. The training emphasised safe, humane, and low-stress handling techniques in accordance with institutional animal welfare guidelines and the internationally recognised 4Rs principles—Replacement, Reduction, Refinement, and Responsibility.

Participants received comprehensive instruction on rodent biology, behaviour, stress recognition, humane endpoints, and laboratory biosafety before progressing to supervised practical sessions. Hands-on training included mouse and rat restraint techniques, oral gavage, and subcutaneous, intraperitoneal, and intravenous administration procedures. Participants also gained practical experience in survival and terminal blood collection, anaesthesia selection, humane euthanasia, necropsy, and systematic organ harvesting, with emphasis on procedural accuracy, operator safety, ethical conduct, and meticulous documentation to support high-quality and reproducible research.

The workshop also served as a valuable platform for strengthening laboratory competencies and reinforcing best practices in preclinical research. By combining theoretical knowledge with practical application, participants developed greater confidence in performing laboratory procedures while recognising the importance of balancing scientific advancement with responsible animal care.

Through initiatives such as the Faculty Development Training series, IHS continues to strengthen research capacity and promote excellence in biomedical research. The workshop reflects the Institute's commitment to advancing ethical research practices, enhancing technical expertise, and preparing researchers to conduct rigorous, reproducible, and welfare-conscious preclinical studies that contribute to scientific innovation and improved health outcomes.

The Pengiran Anak Puteri Rashidah Sa'adatul Bolkiah (PAPRSB) Institute of Health Sciences

UBD's PAP Rashidah Sa'adatul Bolkiah Institute of Health Sciences (PAPRSB IHS) has expanded beyond solely providing medical training. Graduate programmes such as Master of Medicine, Master of Nursing, Master of Public Health, and Masters and PhD by Research as well as undergraduate programmes across six main disciplines – Medicine, Biomedical Sciences, Nursing, Midwifery, Pharmacy and Dentistry are now offered. We ensure the Institute remains relevant and sensitive to the rapidly changing needs of the country. Our programmes are products of a continuous review of our curricula, and all our undergraduate programmes have undergone major enhancements and are now also designed to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship, and for students to assume leadership roles, tempered with a keen awareness of the environment.



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You may freely distribute copies of this newsletter and information about the PAPRSB Institute of Health Sciences to any interested parties.



UBD Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Hazri bin Haji Kifle, together with staff members of Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) during the PAPRSB IHS Raya Celebration, celebrating the spirit of unity and camaraderie within the university community.



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