

Groundbreaking research

IN the realm of life sciences, the pursuit of knowledge often leads researchers down fascinating paths of discovery. Chong Guey Yong, a dedicated scholar, is charting one such course with her groundbreaking PhD thesis, which investigates the interrelationships between chronotype, chrononutrition, and glucose tolerance among prediabetic individuals in Malaysia.

Chong, who is doing the Doctor of Philosophy (Life Sciences) programme at Tunku Abdul Rahman University of Management and Technology (TAR UMT) seeks to unravel the mysteries of biological timing and its impact on health outcomes in her research, known as Chrono-DM. The study is aimed at recruiting 166 participants and follow them for

six months, collecting data on various aspects of their lives, from diet and sleep patterns to physical activities and glycemic outcomes. By shedding light on how timing influences blood glucose control, her research could provide valuable insights into optimising meal timing for prediabetic individuals, particularly in the Asian population.

Prior to joining TAR UMT, Chong completed her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Nutrition Science and Health Science (Nutrition) at a public university. "I chose to pursue my PhD at TAR UMT due to its accreditation and reputation for delivering high-quality education with abundant resources for students, which I believe are instrumental in my academic journey. The opportunity to select a

dissertation topic granted by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) was also a compelling factor. Moreover, there are many experienced supervisors at TAR UMT, especially in the nutrition field, offering invaluable guidance and mentorship. Additionally, the university offers funding assistance for financially disadvantaged students like myself, where I am a recipient of the TARC Student Loan Fund. The loan covers my study fees for three years and it is interest-free. These factors collectively make TAR UMT the perfect choice for my doctoral studies in life sciences."

Chong is in her third year of the doctorate programme and her research work has been marked by excellence, culminating in her winning third place in the Young Investigator Symposium at the Malaysian Association for the Study of Obesity (MASO) 2023 Scientific Conference on Obesity.

She shared her experience in competing in the symposium. "As compared to working in the lab and talking with individuals for my research work, presenting in a symposium was a different ballgame altogether. This is why I had to present my research findings in a clear, engaging and compelling manner which involved effectively communicating the significance of my research, detailing the methodology I employed, and



Chong (seated first row, rightmost) conducting a survey to gather data for her research work at a public hospital.

presenting the results obtained. Additionally, the opportunity to be able to answer questions from the judges and the symposium attendees has helped strengthen my confidence. I am glad my efforts paid off with this achievement."

She continued, "In fact, I am very grateful for this opportunity to compete in the symposium as it has given me valuable exposure and experience on how to present and discuss with relevant stakeholders about my research project. To come to this stage not only depended on my own skills but also the support from TAR UMT and my programme supervisor, Assoc Prof Dr Koo Hui Chin."

Aside from her success in the symposium, Chong's research proposal titled *Chronotype, chrononutrition and glucose tolerance among prediabetic individuals: research protocol for a prospective longitudinal study of Chrono-DM* has been

published in the *BioMed Central (BMC) Primary Care*, an open access, peer-reviewed journal.

The Doctor of Philosophy (Life Sciences) is a research postgraduate programme designed to produce graduates who receive broad and in-depth training in the core areas of life sciences (relating to biology, biochemistry and environmental science). It takes a minimum duration of three years to study full-time or four years for part-time. It is research-based and candidates can enrol at any time throughout the year.

■ For more information about TAR UMT's postgraduate programmes, visit TAR UMT's Open Day from now until June 23, 10am to 5pm (excluding public holidays). You can also call 011-1058 5971 or visit www.tarc.edu.my. Various financial aid for postgraduate programmes are available for qualified students.



Chong (at the rostrum), presenting her research work at the Young Investigator Symposium.