

## Media Release

### National Heart Centre (NHC) Singapore established Singapore's first Homograft Bank

**Singapore, 12 December 2008** - The National Heart Centre (NHC) Singapore established Singapore's first national homograft tissue bank in February 2008 with the support from the Ministry of Health (MOH).

Known as **National Cardiovascular Homograft Bank (NCHB)**, it will create a safe, reliable and affordable local supply of cryopreserved heart valves and tracheal homografts in Singapore.

In Singapore, Congenital Heart Disease (CHD) affects about 0.81% of total live births. This works out to around 12,000 adults with about 300 new cases annually.

The procedure of choice for paediatric patients born with congenital heart diseases of abnormal or missing valves and adult patients with acquired heart or vascular diseases caused by recurrent infections (endocarditis), stenosis (hardening and narrowing of valves) and regurgitation ('leaky' valves) is homograft heart valves replacement. We expect the need for suitable homografts for adult congenital patients to increase as the survival rate of congenital patients into adulthood increases due to medical advancement.

Before the establishment of the NCHB, local hospitals and doctors needing a homograft for their patients will have to search for suitable tissues from more than 70 homograft and heart valves banks worldwide. This is a time-consuming and expensive process. When human homografts remain unavailable, these patients may have to undergo implantation with bioprosthetic (synthetic) valves, which are less durable and not as efficient.

By establishing the NCHB, NHC hopes to fill this gap between demand and supply. Dr Lim Yeong Phang, Medical Director, NCHB and Consultant Cardiothoracic Surgeon, NHC explained,

"We hope to reduce the reliance on dwindling and expensive overseas sources in the long term so that we can offer optimal and timely treatment to our patients. The lower cost of NCHB grafts also translates to lower healthcare costs for our patients."



National Heart  
Centre Singapore  

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Since its establishment, NCHB has supplied two locally procured and processed homografts to two replacement surgeries done in Singapore hospitals.

The homograft in NCHB currently come from three main sources, namely tissue pledges, explanted hearts from heart transplant recipients and tissues donation from deceased's loved ones.

The NCHB will continue to work very closely with its partners, including the National Organ Transplant Unit (NOTU) and local hospitals in the recovery of homograft from suitable donors.

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*You are cordially invited to the press conference on National Cardiovascular Homograft Bank. Details are as follow:-*

*Date: 12 December 2008 (Friday)  
Time: 9:30 am – 10:20 am  
Venue: Lecture Theatre, National Heart Centre Singapore  
Level 3, Mistri Wing  
17 Third Hospital Avenue  
Singapore 168752*

*To RSVP, please contact Teo Hwee Leng at Tel: 6236 7415, email: teo.hwee.leng@nhc.com.sg, by 11 December 2008, 6 pm*



### **About the National Heart Centre Singapore**

The National Heart Centre (NHC) Singapore is a 185-bed national and regional referral centre for cardiovascular diseases. A one-stop facility with the largest heart specialists group in Singapore, NHC treats complex cases and sees the highest volume of heart patients locally.

Each year, we handle over 90,000 outpatient consultations, 6000 interventional and surgical procedures and 9000 inpatients. Our outcomes for heart attack treatment, balloon angioplasty and bypass surgery have been shown to be equivalent to international standards.

NHC is the first heart centre outside USA and in Asia to receive the prestigious Joint Commission International (JCI) since 2005, which is an assurance of safe and quality patient care for our patients.

### **Appendix:**

1. FAQs on National Cardiovascular Homograft Bank (NCHB)
2. Press Briefing Programme