Global Alliance of Medical Excellence

Newsletter 2025.11

Global Alliance of Medical Excellence

Message from Dean of Korea University College of Medicine

Dear GAME Members and Colleagues,

On behalf of the entire faculty and staff of Korea University College of Medicine, I extend my warmest wishes for your peace and well-being. We remain deeply grateful for the collaborative opportunities, joint research initiatives, and academic exchanges with GAME members, through which we have been able to advance scientific excellence and strengthen the capabilities of our students.

This June, I had the privilege of attending the 9th GAME Annual Meeting at the University of Nottingham. The event fostered meaningful dialogue and collaboration among leaders and educators worldwide, reaffirming GAME's role as a dynamic network dedicated to shaping the future of global medical education and scientific innovation.

Over the past year, medical education in Korea has faced an unprecedented challenge, as many students temporarily stepped away from the educational environment in opposition to national policy decisions. While encouraging our students to remain engaged in their studies, we also endeavored to implement initiatives that would best support their educational development, including the completion of a long-awaited full renovation of our academic facilities. Now that all students have returned to their programs, we anticipate even greater progress in collaboration, education, and research.

In November, I was granted the privilege of being reappointed for a second term as Dean of Korea University College of Medicine. Over the next two years, I remain fully committed to fostering even more active communication, strengthening collaboration with all GAME member institutions, and advancing our shared mission of excellence in medical education, research, and service to humanity.

I sincerely look forward to our continued partnership and shared accomplishments.

Warm regards,

Sung-Bom Pyun, M.D., Ph.D.

Dean, Korea University College of Medicine
Professor of Department of Biomedical Sciences, and Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

Global Alliance of Medical Excellence

Message from the Vice Dean for External Affairs, Korea University College of Medicine

Dear GAME colleagues,

It is my sincere pleasure to be able to greet you as the new Vice Dean for External Affairs at Korea University College of Medicine. In this role, I aim to serve as a bridge between our institution and the distinguished member universities who make GAME the vibrant and future-facing network it is.

Over the past year, GAME has grown into a dynamic platform where educators, researchers, and students connect to share ideas and pursue inter-professional collaborations. Korea University is honored to take part in this dialogue, and deeply appreciates the dedication and partnership of our colleagues across the network.

I am filled with excitement and anticipation as GAME looks ahead to its 10th Annual Meeting at Lund in August 2026. These gatherings not only inspire intellectual engagement, but also celebrate the joy of human connection. We at Korea University are thrilled to continue participating in this remarkable tradition of collaboration and success.

In parting, I look forward to meeting many of you in person, nurturing our connections, and exploring new opportunities to bring our work into conversation. I am confident that the coming year will see GAME toast continued successes on its journey towards innovation and collaboration.

With gratitude,

Gangjee Ko, M.D., Ph.D.
Vice Dean for External Affairs
Professor of Division of Nephrology, Department of Internal Medicine
Korea University College of Medicine

Profile : https://guro.kumc.or.kr/en/doctor-department/doctor/view.do?drNo=5373

Highlight from Korea University

VIC-K to Lead Korea-ARPA-H Health Security Project

Korea University College of Medicine's Vaccine Innovation Center (VIC-K) has been selected as the lead institution for the 2025 Korea-ARPA-H Health Security Project, a national initiative modeled after the U.S. Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H). This groundbreaking selection positions KU Medicine at the forefront of Korea's biohealth innovation strategy.

The Korea-ARPA-H project develops transformative biomedical technologies for emerging diseases and future pandemics. As the nation's only private non-profit vaccine research institute, VIC-K has coordinated research among leading universities, national laboratories, and biotechnology companies, and expanded into the Chung Mong-Koo Future Medicine Building, significantly upgrading its research infrastructure and enabling the successful launch of the ARPA-H initiative.

The center will focus on accelerating vaccine development pipelines, integrating AI-driven prediction systems, and enhancing global collaboration in public-health preparedness. These efforts will contribute to faster, more effective responses to health emergencies in Korea and around the world.

▲ VIC Immunology lab

Highlight from Korea University
VIC-K to Lead Korea-ARPA-H Health Security Project

Professor Heejin Cheong, Director of the Vaccine Innovation Center, emphasised that “This project exemplifies our commitment to bridging research excellence with societal responsibility. By uniting scientists, clinicians, and policymakers, KU Medicine will contribute to building a safer and healthier world.”

▲ Animal Biosafety Level 3 Lab

The selection of VIC-K underscores the growing recognition of Korea University as a global hub for translational medicine and innovation. Through this initiative, KU Medicine aims not only to enhance national health security but also to share knowledge and technology with partner institutions across the GAME network.

This milestone represents a significant step toward realizing our mission, transforming research into real-world impact through collaboration, creativity, and courage.

Full article : https://medicine.korea.ac.kr/en/news/newsletter/view.do?articleNo=55190

Key Publication : Breakthrough in Treating Recurrent Brain Tumors through Precision Genomic Analysis

A research team led by Professor Jason Kyungha Sa from the Department of Biomedical Informatics at Korea University College of Medicine has discovered a new potential therapeutic target for recurrent meningioma through genomic analysis.

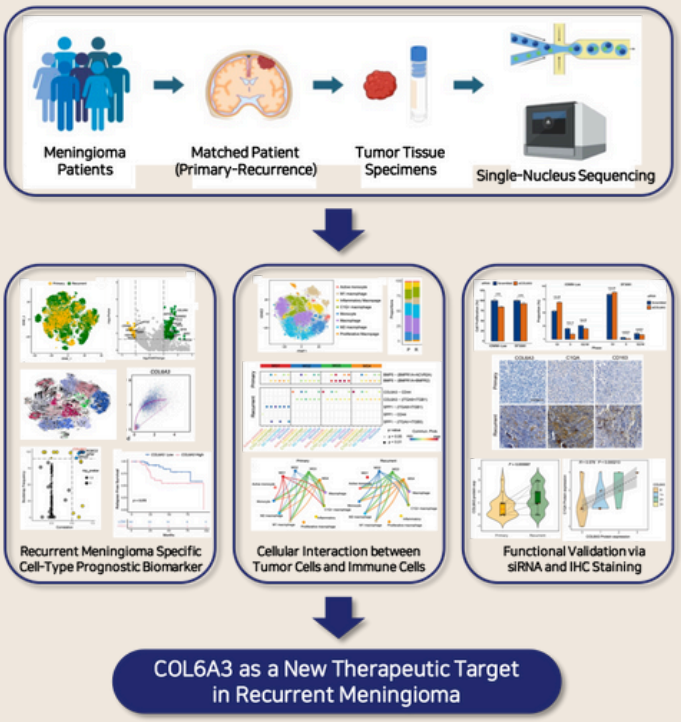
Meningiomas are the most common type of brain tumor, accounting for approximately 30% of all brain tumors. Most of them are diagnosed as benign tumors; however, recurrent meningiomas are notoriously difficult to treat and are associated with poor prognoses.

To understand its recurrence mechanism, the team systematically analysed the tumor's evolutionary process and its interactions with surrounding immune cells using single-cell sequencing data. The study revealed that COL6A3 is a key driver of recurrence risk and a promising therapeutic target.

▲ Professor Jason Kyungha Sa from the Department of Biomedical Informatics at Korea University College of Medicine

Their results revealed that recurrent meningiomas demonstrated accelerated cell proliferation and increased expression of COL6A3. By tracing tumor transcriptional changes over time and performing cellular interaction analysis, the team found that COL6A3 was increasingly activated in the later stage of tumor progression. Particularly, COL6A3 interacts with immunosuppressive macrophages, facilitating malignant transformation of the tumor cells.

In a separate group of 110 meningioma patients, the team confirmed that patients with high expression levels of COL6A3 were significantly more likely to experience early tumor recurrence, reinforcing how important COL6A3 is in driving tumor recurrence.



▲Visual summary of COL6A3's role and macrophage interactions in recurrent meningioma, revealed by single-cell analysis

"This study is significant as it shows, in detail, how meningiomas progress at recurrence and how the tumor cells interact with the surrounding tumor microenvironment," said Professor Sa. "For recurrent meningiomas, where treatment options are limited, our findings provide a crucial starting point for developing new therapeutic strategies targeting COL6A3."

The results were published in the journal Nature Communications (Impact Factor: 15.7) under the title "Single-cell analysis reveals a longitudinal trajectory of meningioma evolution and heterogeneity."

Full article : https://medicine.korea.ac.kr/en/news/newsletter/view.do?articleNo=55187

Details : https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-025-60653-0

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The 8th KU International Medical Student Research Conference

▲ Students presenting their research at the 7th conference

The 8th KU International Medical Student Research Conference 2025 will be held on 20 December at Korea University College of Medicine, continuing one of the college's most meaningful academic traditions that celebrates the spirit of research and innovation.

Since its launch, the conference has grown into a dynamic forum where students present their research, exchange ideas, and experience the value of academic collaboration. The 7th conference in 2024 drew strong interest from medical students worldwide, with 129 participants from Korea University, 27 from other domestic universities, and 21 students from overseas institutions, including members of the GAME.

▲ Poster Session at the 7th conference, where students shared their research and exchanged ideas.

Building on this momentum, the 2025 conference will feature a Keynote Lecture, Poster Session, Plenary Lecture, and Award Ceremony, offering students the opportunity to share their work, engage in discussion with faculty and peers, and gain insight into the process of transforming ideas into knowledge.

More than an academic gathering, the conference embodies the college's commitment to nurturing curiosity, collaboration, and leadership in medical science. It stands as a platform that connects diverse perspectives and inspires the next generation of researchers to advance the frontiers of medicine.