Potential breakthrough

09 AUG 2016 / 11:39 H.

YOU'RE a recent university graduate with an eloquent cover letter, a near perfect grade point average, work experience at a medical institution and outstanding recommendation letters, but there's still one key item that's missing to make you stand out: Experience in medical research.

Being part of a medical research team is not only an opportunity for you to be part of a potential breakthrough discovery but also demonstrates your ability to analyse primary literature, understand the scientific inquiry process and how it informs the practice as well as overcome failure by going back to the drawing board with strong problem-solving skills and new ideas. Newcastle University Medicine Malaysia (NUMed) recognises the importance of exposing students to research to give them a holistic educational experience. This school holiday, four biomedical science students are completing a research scholarship at NUMed. They are putting their theoretical knowledge to the test with a real world research project looking at the presence of antibiotic resistance genes and bacteria in surface water, rivers and streams locally.

"Newcastle University UK is ranked among the top in the world for research. We are bringing that capability to our NUMed campus in Malaysia. One of the key areas of focus is to encourage students to undertake research projects that not only help to enhance their knowledge, but also have a direct positive impact on the local community," said Dr Michaela Goodson, Dean of Research at NUMed.

"A dedicated research laboratory is being opened on the campus which will allow students and faculty to undertake laboratory based research projects into molecular mechanisms and determinants of disease in Malaysia," she added.

Various other students are also exploring the medical research route.

Five medical students, Mohit Mohan, Alireza Behzadnia, Teh Siu Hoong, Cheng Yuan Moo and Sailesh Mohana Krishnan, who have undertaken medical education projects as part of their curriculum, will be conducting a presentation at an International Conference in Singapore next year. Muzammil Nahaboo Solim (pix) and Ivan Tan who have undertaken clinical research on oral cancer and chronic diseases relevant to the local Johor population are now even considering furthering their research ambitions.

"When I first decided to pursue clinical research, it was with the intention of just enhancing my resume. I did not realise how life-changing the experience would be for me," said Muzammil.

"Having now worked closely with the local community to better their well-being, I'm now inspired to continue my path in medical research and hope to play an instrumental role in improving the lives of the larger society in Malaysia."