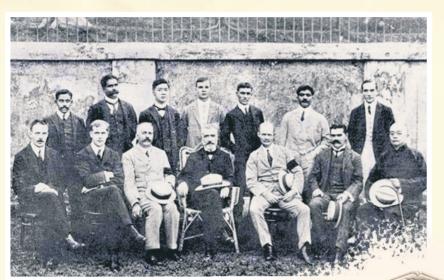# From wooden hut to
top 20 in the world

In 120 years, NUS Medicine has grown from providing basic medical care to becoming a research-intensive medical school focused on cutting-edge medicine.

1821
Singapore's first general hospital is an unsanitary small wooden building near the junction of Bras Basah and Stamford roads, offering basic treatments.

The Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States Government Medical School, Sepoy Lines

1905
A new school of medicine to train locals opens at Sepoy Lines (the current site of the Singapore General Hospital) with 23 students. Merchants led by Mr Tan Jiak Kim (right) and Mr Seah Liang Seah raise $87,000 in 1905 and another $120,000 in 1912.

King Edward VII Medical School in 1913

1910
Seven local medical students are the first to obtain Licentiates in Medicine and Surgery. The "Magnificent 7" become assistant medical officers or assistant surgeons, earning a lowly $250 a month.

Pioneering class with a Licentiate in Medicine and Surgery standing behind teachers

1911
Ms Eugenie Nunes becomes the first woman graduand, but she returns to Pakistan on graduating.

1912
Physiology is the first professorial chair to be set up.

1916
A medical students' hostel is set up to accommodate students from Malaya.

King Edward VII College of Medicine

1932
Asians, considered inferior by the colonial government, are finally allowed to take positions in the Straits Settlements Medical Service.

Mid-1930s
Dr Gopal Haridas is the first local graduate to receive further training in England and admitted as a member of the Royal College of Physicians. Dr Michael Thiruchelvam is the first local graduate to obtain higher qualification in surgery.

1936
A huge bungalow in Grange Road, called Holne Chase, is converted into a hostel for 30 female students.

1941-1945
During World War II, more than 200 medical students join the Medical Auxiliary Service and are deployed to hospitals and first aid posts, often working 18 hours a day.

1942
Tan Tock Seng Hospital is bombed on Feb 13, killing medical student Yoong Tatt Sin. Another 10 medical students are killed the following day at his funeral. The medical school closes.

1946
The King Edward VII College of Medicine reopens on June 17, following the war. About 200 pre-war students return to complete their studies.

1950
The newly formed University of Malaya confers the first Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) on 17 graduates at the Bukit Timah campus.

1957
The Academy of Medicine is founded, paving the way for formal postgraduate training and continuing education.

White Coat Ceremony in 2024

1962
Singapore establishes the University of Singapore, with Professor Kangaratnam Shanmugaratnam as the medical school's dean.

1980
The university officially becomes the National University of Singapore, in Kent Ridge, after a merger with Nanyang University.

1983
The Faculty of Medicine relocates from Sepoy Lines to Kent Ridge.

1985
The University Hospital (precursor to the National University Hospital) is set up as a government-owned hospital run as a self-governing entity. This is the model for all public hospitals today.

1994
• The National Medical Research Council is set up to oversee, coordinate and approve funds for medical research.
• The White Coat Ceremony is introduced to induct medical students into the fraternity. Faculty members help incoming students don their first white coats, a symbol of physicians.

2002
The government-imposed quota of no more than a third of medical students be women is lifted, resulting in an immediate jump in female students to 43 per cent of intake in 2003.

2005
• Duke-NUS Medical School is set up.
• So is the Alice Lee Centre for Nursing Studies, with a $30 million gift from the Lee Foundation
• The Faculty of Medicine is renamed the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine on the school's centenary with a $100 million gift from the Yong Loo Lin Trust.
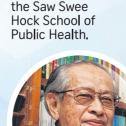
Dr Yong Loo Lin

2008
The National University Health System (NUHS, below) is established to integrate and improve education, research and the provision of healthcare.

2011
A $30 million donation from NUS alumnus Professor Saw Swee Hock (below) leads to the setting up of the Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health.

2012
The 15-storey Centre for Translational Medicine is officially opened. The Silent Mentors programme is initiated, with students taught to treat donated cadavers with utmost respect.

2014
The Centre for Biomedical Ethics is designated a World Health Organisation collaborating centre – the first in Asia and 5th in the world.

2019
School ranked among top 20 in the world – a ranking it maintains today.

2025
Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (left) celebrates 120 years.