

# SIME OILS, UKM SEAL TIE-UP

Clinical trial launched to explore use of tocotrienols for treatment of non-alcoholic fatty liver disease

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**S**IME Darby Plantation Bhd's (Sime Plantation) downstream entity Sime Darby Oils (Sime Oils) is working with Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) to conduct a two-year clinical trial on the therapeutic approach of tocotrienols for the treatment of non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD).

Sime Oils managing director Haris Arshad said the partnership could be a catalyst for the group to conduct more trials on human health issues, in line with its interest to diversify into downstream activities and business opportunities.

"This is the first collaboration between Sime Oils and UKM in the medical field involving a non-communicable disease.

"NAFLD is the term for a range of conditions caused by a build-up of fat in the liver that may lead to serious damage in the long term if left untreated.

"This is an important element



*Sime Darby Oils managing director Haris Arshad (second from left) exchanging documents with Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) Faculty of Medicine dean Prof Dr Raja Affendi Ali after the signing ceremony in Petaling Jaya yesterday. With them are Sime Darby Oils head for Asia Pacific Asanee Mallamphut (left) and UKM Faculty of Medicine deputy dean Prof Dr Ahmad Nazrun Shuid. PIC BY MUSTAFFA KAMAL*

in our aspiration to venture into the nutraceutical industry in the future," he said at the signing ceremony, here, yesterday.

Both parties expect to see preliminary results within six months from the commencement of the clinical trial this month and a full publication of the findings next year.

UKM Faculty of Medicine dean Prof Dr Raja Affendi Ali said the prevalence of NAFLD in Malaysia could be about 15 to 30 per cent of

the general adult population.

The projection was based on the high prevalence of other metabolic diseases that are commonly associated with NAFLD, such as high blood sugar, hypertension and obesity.

He said 60 per cent of Malaysians with slightly elevated cholesterol levels had NAFLD and yet no medication was available.

"We are running a randomised double-blind clinical trial with a

localised demographic sample, focusing on a full-spectrum testing of fatty liver, the first and the most comprehensive of its kind in the world," he said.

Raja Affendi is the lead investigator of the clinical trial and a consultant physician in gastroenterology and hepatology in Hospital Canselor Tuanku Mukhriz.

The tocotrienols used in the clinical trial studies are extracted from palm fruits acquired exclusively from Sime Plantation.