

# Three get grants for cancer research

## Young scientists focusing their expertise on breast cancer

By NOEL FOO  
noelfoo@thestar.com.my

CONTINUING a 13-year tradition, the National Cancer Council (Makna) recently awarded this year's Makna Cancer Research Award to three promising young researchers.

The three recipients were awarded RM30,000 each to kick-start their proposed research projects.

They were present to receive their certificates and cheques in a ceremony at the Academy of Sciences Malaysia (ASM) office in Menara Matrade.

"Nurturing young scientists to push boundaries and advance the frontiers of knowledge for a better

tomorrow is always exciting," said ASM secretary-general Datuk Dr Samsudin Tugiman in his opening speech.

"The award signifies our strong and unwavering commitment towards what we have set out to do since our inception – to help cancer patients," said Makna president Datuk Mohd Farid Ariffin.

The three recipients are Dr Yeap Swee Keong of Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Dr Ho Wan Yong of the University of Nottingham and Noorfaiza Abdul Aziz of Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM).

All the proposed studies focus on different areas of breast cancer.



**Pushing boundaries:** Makna Cancer Research Award recipients (from left) Noorfaiza of UiTM, Dr Yeap of UPM and Dr Ho of the University of Nottingham with mock-ups of their grants.

"In layman terms, my study will investigate the use of a type of avian virus strain to create a vaccine that effectively treats the cancer.

"The vaccine is currently being used on poultry and hopefully humans as well," said Yeap, 31.

Dr Ho, 28, will be taking her study in a different direction by culturing breast cancer cells to create a model that will serve as a foundation for future studies on breast cancer.

"Currently, there is no rigid

model, so it is my hope that we can develop a better understanding of breast cancer," she said.

Noorfaiza, 26, will be undertaking a study that involves combining two types of drug compounds to see their effect in treating triple negative breast cancer cells.

The three recipients of this year's award will be required to report their findings to ASM.

Since the inception of the award in 2001, Makna has distributed nearly RM1.3mil in research grants to 38 recipients.