

# Award for woman cancer researcher

CANCER researcher Marissa Teo has become the first Singaporean to receive the Unesco-L'Oréal international fellowship award for women in science.

Dr Teo, a research fellow in the Department of Medical Oncology at Singapore's National Cancer Centre, accepted her award at an event on March 3 and 4 at Unesco headquarters in Paris. Of the 15 international winners, only three were from the Asia-Pacific.

Dr Teo received the award and a US\$20,000 research fellowship from Beatrice Dautresme, L'Oréal executive vice-president and

chief executive officer of the L'Oréal foundation, and Walter Erdelen, Unesco's assistant director-general of natural sciences.

The award recognises Dr Teo's "promising work" in the area of nasopharyngeal carcinoma, a cancer at the back of the nose toward the base of the skull. It is prevalent in southern China and South-east Asia.

Dr Teo said she is "overwhelmed" to be the first Singaporean to win the award. "Cancer is on the rise in the region and there is an ever-increasing need for research into the forms that are more common here

than in the West, which is why this award is so important as it allows me to continue my research in this area," she said.

The grant will help her advance her research on cell therapy at the Baylor College of Medicine's Centre for Cell and Gene Therapy in the US.

Into their 12th year, the L'Oréal-Unesco awards for women in science recognise exceptional women scientists who are also role models for younger scientists. This year, L'Oréal and Unesco gave out 15 international fellowships and five laureate awards.