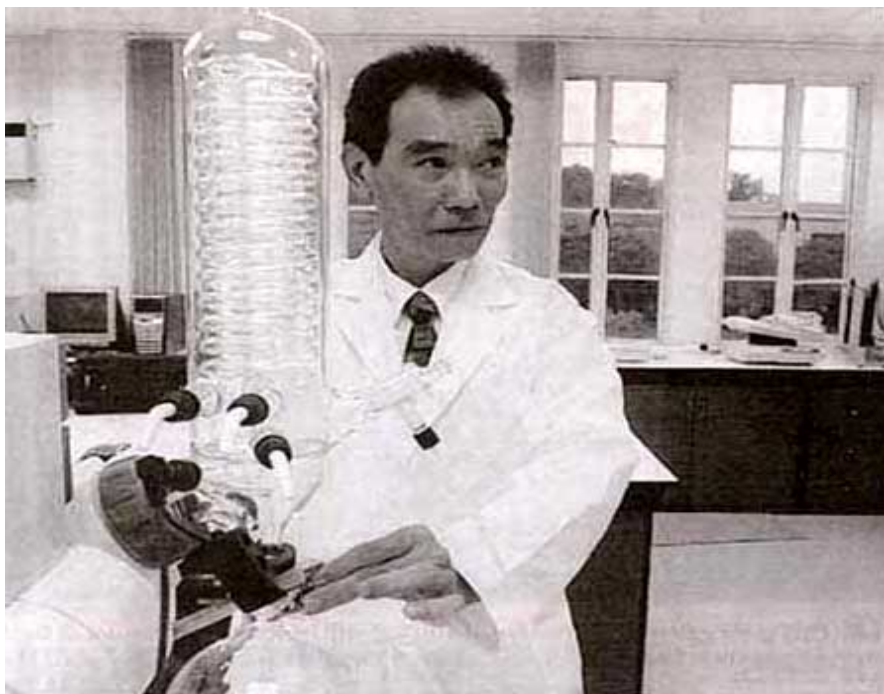


You're never too old for the life sciences

More working adults are signing up for courses in the field that will help them to make a career switch

By **CHANG AI-LIEN**
SCIENCE CORRESPONDENT

FOR more than two decades, Mr Wang Kuo Hua put his electronics engineering diploma to good use, as a service and quality manager in an industrial safety equipment company. Then he got bitten by the life-sciences bug. There is so much going on in the life sciences, and I wanted to be part of it," said the 46-year-old, who is now working for Scanmed Technology Singapore, which produces medical equipment for critical care. Showing that it is not just students here who are becoming more interested in the life sciences, Mr. Wang is part of a growing number of working adults preparing themselves for new careers in the field.



The Institute, which runs courses for working adults, more than 150 people have taken up the foundation certificate in biomedical sciences since the part-time course started in October last year. The 10-month course gives people who have little or no science education a sound understanding of core subjects such as biological chemistry, biotechnology, molecular cell biology, and physiology, and is meant as preparation for admission into an undergraduate degree course or employment in the life sciences industry. Mr Wang, who is now doing a Bachelor of Science in Pharmaceutical Management, said: "I find that when I do sales in medical equipment, my engineering and science knowledge complement what I'm doing very well. "Now, it's easier to talk shop with the doctors who are my customers." Dr John Tholen, Director of Biomedical Sciences launched

this course, awarded by Britain's University of Bradford. He also developed the Bachelor of Science in Biotechnology and a Bachelor of Medical Sciences (Medicinal Chemistry), which are awarded by Macquarie University, Sydney. Dr John Tholen, said that the institute had spent S\$1.5 million setting up its biomedical centre, which has two laboratories for students to gain those essential laboratory skills needed in the life sciences. I also wanted to provide flexible approach to education and allow working adults with a non-science background the opportunity to pursue a degree in life sciences. This is particularly important during a time of recession since this would provide even more opportunities for people who

feel they may be displaced in their current jobs. The Centre for biomedical sciences is holding an open house today for those interested in its training programmes.

Doing it for career...

"When I do sales in medical equipment, my engineering and science knowledge complement what I'm doing very well. Now, it's easier to talk shop with the doctors who are my customers"

Mr Wang (left), who works for a medical-equipment fleet is doing the bachelor degree in pharmaceutical management.

...or for the children

"It would be a good idea to learn more, so I can guide my children if they want to study it in school."

Housewife and mother Jenny Wong, who is doing a course in Biomedical Sciences