



Dr. Ong Siew Hwa  
CEO & Chief Scientist

With a Ph.D. in cell and molecular biology, Dr. Ong brings around 15 years of rich industry experience in holding multiple roles in technical, pharmaceutical R&D, molecular diagnostics, consulting, and other specialty areas. Along with spearheading Acumen Diagnostics, she was also the chairman of BioSingapore and has been serving at the National University of Singapore (Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine) as an adjunct assistant professor.



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# ACUMEN DIAGNOSTICS

## Advancements in Healthcare Through Innovations in Clinical Trials

Recently, an article in the latest edition of Outlook 2023 highlighted how APAC has been a clinical trial hotbed in the last decade, accounting for 50 percent of new clinical trial activities in the global business. Most studies credit the growth to multiple driving factors, including a rise in considerable investment in value-based healthcare, med-tech, and pharmaceutical industries by the government and industries alike, especially after the pandemic. Exacerbated by Covid-19, the soaring growth of the sector is also spurred by the skyrocketing costs linked to healthcare, underscoring the imperative need for innovative models and solutions to materialize the early and cost-effective diagnosis of diseases, prevention, and precision medicine. However, the best minds at Acumen Diagnostics - a leading medical diagnostics and technology company - seem to have understood this dire need early. Effectively catering to this increasing demand, the Singapore-headquartered venture has been relentless in keeping up with innovations to the standard clinical trial services.

Established in 2010, Acumen Research Laboratories is an award-winning medical technology company, with deep clinical trial expertise in biomarkers discovery and validation for cancer and infectious diseases. In 2020, rebranded as Acumen Diagnostics, the company succeeded to become one of the tender awardees for Covid-19 PCR testing and a MOH-approved Covid-19 vaccination center. After the Covid-19 situation subsided, Acumen continues to focus on infectious diseases but more broadly on sepsis, and other infections including hospitalized pneumonia, urinary tract infections (UTI), intra-abdominal infections (IAI), and Implant and Tissue infections (ITI). "We have strong internal capabilities in R&D, in particular, biomarker discovery and clinical validation for utility as diagnostic or screening assays for such infectious diseases", adds Dr. Ong Siew Hwa, CEO & Chief Scientist, Acumen Diagnostics. Acumen Diagnostics distinguishes itself through its wealth of experience and expertise in the pathobiology

and microbiology of sepsis, cancer genetics, and chronic comorbidities such as diabetes and heart diseases, along with Covid-19 infections.

Serving companies creating new antibiotics, diagnostics, and medical devices, Acumen Diagnostics is highly-acknowledged for its proprietary products named Acu-Corona Covid-19 PCR test kits and AcuSept sepsis host-response test by PCR. Employing real-time PCR (RT-PCR) instead of immunology or microbiology culture, AcuSept measures a panel of specific biomarkers in the immune cells, within just four hours and with high sensitivity. AcuSept is potentially relevant as a companion diagnostic in sepsis treatment and as a biomarker to guide clinical trials in the development of new antibiotics, diagnostics, and medical devices.



### The Growth Engines

Dr. Ong Siew Hwa believes that the combination of comprehensive technical expertise and the versatile perspective of Acumen's highly entrepreneurial team allows them to understand the industry and its trends deeply, thereby steering successful innovation. "Our team's collaborative nature fosters a dynamic environment that promotes creativity, teamwork, and continuous learning. This allows us to make informed decisions, identify untapped opportunities, and develop strategies that drive sustainable growth for the company", claims Dr. Ong Siew Hwa.

Acumen Diagnostics has built up a team of dedicated veteran staff who works towards a collective cause while keeping the client informed at every step with consistent communication and collaboration. Every progress, change, or decision in a project is aligned with the client's requirements through market research, feedback mechanisms, and user

experience enhancements, which further enables the team to craft bespoke service experiences. Considered the key engines of the company, the testing and manufacturing labs are highly automated, well-equipped, and supported by a designated IT team and other required partners. The medical laboratory technologists and technicians run the tests with supervision by the managers, who had also developed the laboratory SOPs; they also oversee standards and regulatory compliances. The strategic partnerships forged with various public and private organizations that are based locally and overseas also help the company forge sustainable efficiency.

Acumen Diagnostics also takes great pride in its diverse workforce, with an optimal balance of genders, ethnicities, and ages among the employees, including working mothers and flexi-hours. The organization is run under the guidance of a management team that comprises visionary thought leaders, who contribute to the growth of the company and the industry by actively participating in events, conferences, working committees, media interviews, and publications. Presiding at the forefront of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) and sustainability strategies, the CEO makes sure that the company continuously makes a positive impact on society in multiple ways by promoting energy efficiency and social equality in the workplace. The company has also empowered the staff to be ready for future pandemic outbreaks through its decentralized laboratories and offices, as well as supply chain sustainability initiatives. With the situation of Covid-19 under control, the company plans to allocate more investment into innovation in clinical trials, and steering the integration of sustainability into the company's growth strategy.

### The Road Ahead

Moving ahead, Acumen will continue to extend its portfolio by devising new products and services, as well as enhancing existing offerings. To achieve this, the company focuses on strengthening its research and development capabilities to embrace artificial intelligence (AI) and other emerging technological advancements. With a focus on expanding its realms, Acumen also plans to reach newer demographics, untapped markets, as well as international and regional geographies. "Our company has started to establish new partnerships and collaborations with other organizations to expand our services. By leveraging complementary expertise or resources, we can continue providing more comprehensive solutions to our clients", concludes Dr. Ong Siew Hwa. [ABO](#)