

Short biography

Professor Gavin JD Smith

1. Director, Programme in Emerging Infectious Diseases, Duke-NUS Medical School, Singapore
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Professor Gavin Smith is Director of the Programme in Emerging Infectious Diseases at Duke-NUS Medical School, with appointments at the Duke-NUS Centre for Outbreak Preparedness and SingHealth Duke-NUS Global Health Institute in Singapore. His primary training was in ecology and evolution at The University of Melbourne. He obtained his PhD from The University of Hong Kong, where he also undertook his post-doctoral training in the Department of Microbiology before moving to Singapore to start his lab. Prof Smith's research programme primarily investigates the ecology and evolution of zoonotic viruses and the genomic epidemiology of human respiratory pathogens. His lab conducts human and animal disease surveillance throughout Asia via an extensive network of collaborators in universities and hospitals, governmental and intergovernmental research institutions (including UN agencies), NGOs and industry. The ultimate aim of his research is to better understand virus disease ecosystems in Asia – particularly at the animal-human interface – to inform and enhance disease control. His lab is currently studying human interfaces with bats and rodents in Cambodia and Laos, pteropodid fruit bats in the Philippines, and camels in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. Another crucial part of his work is engaging with scientists in the region to assist in developing local research and technical capacity for disease detection, prevention, and control. His team provides training on bat-borne virus surveillance and evolutionary analysis to government scientists from countries across Asia, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East, and they have assisted Kazakhstan Government laboratories in implementing MERS-CoV surveillance in camels and bats. Prof Smith also works with the FAO to build bioinformatics capacity in animal health laboratories in ASEAN.