



**From left:** Dr. Saeed Al-Meer, Prof. Aiman Erbad, and Prof. Ibrahim Al-Kaabi.

# Ten Years of Leadership and Achievement: Inauguration of Small Animal MRI Unit at the Laboratory Animal Research Center

On Monday, February 3, 2025, the Laboratory Animal Research Centre (LARC) at Qatar University (QU) held a celebration to mark ten years of leadership and achievement in the field of animal research to coincide with the inauguration of the Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) Unit. The establishment of this unit is considered a major local and regional achievement towards enhancing the capabilities of the LARC and QU to enable researchers to conduct innovative research in various scientific fields. The unit was inaugurated by Prof. Aiman Erbad, Vice President of Research and Graduate Studies, in the presence of Dr. Ibrahim Al Kaabi, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Prof. Asmaa Ali Al Thani, Vice President for Health and Medical Sciences, Dr. Mohammed Ahmedna, Assistant Vice President for

Health and Medical Sciences, Dr. Saeed Almeer, former Director of Research Support (Grants and Contracts), Dr. Hamda Al Naemi, Founder and Director of the LARC, and a number of the Center's staff members. The ceremony aimed to highlight the LARC's most significant achievements over the past decade.

Prof. Aiman Erbad, Vice President of Research and Graduate Studies, said in the opening ceremony speech: "Despite the recent establishment of the LARC, it has made outstanding achievements and provided valuable opportunities for researchers and students in research, education, training and awareness of the use of laboratory animal research to study various types of human diseases. LARC is

a national platform for developing scientific research in the biological, medical, and pharmaceutical fields, supporting researchers in all educational and research institutions. It can absorb increasing numbers of researchers and provide the best research platforms in animal research.”

On this occasion, Dr. Hamda Al Naemi, Founder and Director of the Laboratory Animal Research Center, gave a presentation highlighting the excellence of the LARC in its pioneering role at both the local and regional levels. She emphasized its innovative design and operating methods, which adhere to international standards in this field, thereby ensuring sustainability and research quality. She noted that the LARC houses, under one roof, a Specific Pathogen-Free (SPF) rodent vivarium, diagnostic laboratories, and cell culture and research labs. Additionally, the LARC includes a live imaging unit equipped with the latest instruments and technologies available in animal research. Dr. Al Naemi also explained that the LARC provides support to researchers from both inside and outside the University through research partnerships and service contracts. Furthermore, she highlighted the center’s effective role in developing distinguished professional and research talent, many of whom have secured prestigious positions in local

and international job markets.

This was followed by a presentation made by Dr. Muralitharan Konar, Manager of Research Projects at the LARC, on MRI technology and the recent and future innovations that can be achieved using this device in various fields of science, including physical, biological, pharmaceutical, and pre-clinical sciences.

The ceremony’s program included three panel discussions that focused on presenting examples of research projects conducted at the LARC through the participation of some researchers from inside and outside Qatar University, and talking about the use of animal models in their research achievements.

LARC is a platform that helps bridge the gap between different disciplines, supports multidisciplinary research, and paves the way for progress and innovation in basic, biological, biomedical, and pharmaceutical sciences. The Center continues to provide humane animal care, conduct animal research, deliver consultancy, and offer training and support to the academic staff, researchers, and postgraduate students at the national level. LARC is characterized by a system of close animal monitoring and humane and veterinary care programs provided by professionally licensed staff.

