

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 13
RUANGAN : MINDA PEMBACA

Utamakan keselamatan makanan elak risiko keracunan

Tan Sri Lee
Lam Thye,
Pengerusi Ikatan
Komuniti Selamat

Kita dikejutkan dengan berita dua kanak-kanak di Kedah meninggal dunia selepas makan keropok dicampur racun tikus.

Kira-kira sebulan lalu, seorang pelajar Tingkatan Lima dan seorang kanak-kanak perempuan berusia dua tahun maut akibat keracunan di sebuah sekolah agama di Gom

bak. Selepas lebih sebulan perkara itu masih di-siasat.

Dilaporkan pada 2022, kira-kira 14,000 kes keracunan makanan disebabkan penyakit bawaan makanan dan air. Adakah ini hanya sedikit daripada kes dilaporkan?

Kejadian seperti ini boleh terus berlaku. Kebanyakan kes sepatutnya boleh dielak jika langkah berjaga-jaga diambil semua pihak bertanggungjawab untuk memastikan keselamatan makanan.

Sudah tiba masa kita memeriksa dan menyemak semula isu berkaitan keselamatan makanan, pengendalian dan tabiat pemakanan.

Pihak berkuasa kesihatan mesti sedar. Pemeriksaan kesihatan pula patut lebih proaktif dan responsif, terutama di sekolah dengan mengadakan pemeriksaan lebih kerap di kantin bagi memastikan pematuan peraturan penyediaan makanan.

Kerajaan juga harus melihat semula Akta Makanan 1983 bagi menilai sama ada terdapat kelemahan atau wujud perkara perlu ditangani.

Keracunan makanan selalunya gejala masalah lebih mendalam mengenai kehidupan manusia disebabkan kerakusan ingin mengejar keuntungan cepat.

Sesetengah peruncit dan kedai makanan mengambil jalan pintas hingga mengabaikan peraturan keselamatan kemudian mengakibatkan pelanggan sakit atau lebih teruk lagi.

Pencemaran makanan boleh mengakibatkan penyakit bawaan makanan, keracunan makanan dan isu kesihatan jangka panjang lain.

Beberapa risiko umum mungkin dihadapi termasuk pencemaran bakteria seperti salmonella, e-coli dan pencemaran fizikal daripada produk serta perkakas kaca dan logam.

Dalam berhadapan risiko ini, apa yang perlu dilakukan seseorang hanyalah membeli barangan

makanan daripada penjual, pasar mahupun kedai baik terkenal serta mempunyai reputasi.

Pembekal dipercayai

Seharusnya hasil barangan segar dan produk daging hanya diperolehi daripada pembekal dipercayai untuk mengurangkan risiko pencemaran.

Makanan pula perlu disejukkan dengan betul pada suhu selamat dan barang kering disimpan dalam bekas bertutup untuk mengelak anai-anai mahupun haiwan perosak lain.

Kita perlu mengikuti prosedur pengendalian makanan betul seperti mencuci tangan sebelum dan selepas mengendalikan makanan, mengasingkan makanan mentah dan masak serta menggunakan papan pemotong berasingan untuk jenis makanan berbeza.

Sudah semestinya daging, ayam, itik, makanan

laut dan telur harus dimasak dengan sempurna serta dihidangkan panas untuk meminimumkan risiko penyakit bawaan makanan.

Satu perkara lagi yang kebanyakan kita gagal lakukan adalah kerap menyemak tarikh luput pada produk makanan sebelum membeli atau memakannya.

Jika didapati melepasi tarikh jualan, kes sebegini perlu dilaporkan kepada pihak pengurusan kedai dengan segera.

Dengan sentiasa proaktif, mengamalkan tabiat keselamatan makanan baik dan sentiasa dimaklumkan terhadap amalan keselamatan makanan, kita boleh mengurangkan risiko berkaitan makanan tercemar dan melindungi diri serta keluarga kita daripada potensi bahaya kesihatan.

Makanan selamat hari ini adalah kunci kepada negara lebih sihat pada masa hadapan.



Kerajaan wajar melihat semula Akta Makanan 1983 untuk menilai sama ada terdapat kelemahan atau wujud perkara perlu ditangani.

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 16
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Syarikat kurangkan gula dalam produk diberi pengiktirafan 'Healthy Choice'

Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) akan memberi pengiktirafan 'Healthy Choice' kepada syarikat yang mengurangkan kandungan gula dalam produk mereka sebagai sebahagian kempen 'perang ke atas gula'.

Menterinya, Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad, berkata adalah mustahak mengurangkan pengambilan gula dalam kalangan rakyat Malaysia kerana ia antara penyebab utama peningkatan berat badan yang merumuskan kepada pelbagai penyakit tidak berjangkit seperti obesiti dan kencing manis.

"Dapatan Tinjauan Kebangsaan Kesihatan dan Morbiditi (NHMS) 2023, satu matriks tidak menunjukkan penurunan, iaitu berat badan yang tinggi.

"Punca utama adalah berkait pengambilan gula, ini antara sebab KKM merancang program untuk isytihar perang ke atas gula.

"Belum buat pelancaran tetapi kami telah susun pogram ini," katanya pada sesi soal jawab lisan di Dewan Negara, semalam.

Beliau menjawab soalan tambahan Senator Datuk A Kesava-das yang ingin tahu pendekatan holistik KKM dalam mengawal



Dr Dzulkefly pada sesi soal jawab lisan di Dewan Negara, semalam.

(Foto ihsan Jabatan Penerangan)

pengambilan gula dalam kalangan rakyat Malaysia.

Pada 16 Mei lalu, Dzulkefly berkata, KKM akan melancarkan 'perang' ke atas gula dalam tempoh terdekat sebagai usaha kerajaan mengurangkan peningkatan penyakit tidak berjangkit dalam kalangan rakyat.

Berdasarkan data NHMS 2023, kira-kira setengah juta atau 2.5 peratus individu dewasa

menghidap empat penyakit tidak berjangkit termasuk obesiti serta kencing manis, namun satu daripada dua rakyat Malaysia dikenal pasti menghadapi obesiti dan berat badan berlebihan.

Mengulas lanjut, Dzulkefly berkata, kementerian sedang meneliti mekanisme untuk meningkatkan akses kepada saringan pantas kandungan gula dalam darah bagi membolehkan rakyat

mengenal pasti jika perlu mendapatkan rawatan lebih awal.

"Pengawalan penyakit tidak berjangkit seperti diabetes sangat penting kerana ia sepanjang hayat, kronik dan tidak akut.

"Justeru, perang ke atas gula ini satu perkara yang kita harus lakukan," katanya.

Dzulkefly berkata, dalam mengemudi KKM, beliau memberi fokus terhadap penyediaan akses kemudahan kesihatan preventif sebagai langkah awal menangani penyakit serta mempromosikan kepentingan menjaga kesihatan.

"Penekanan akan diberikan kepada langkah pencegahan di peringkat awal. Kita tahu NHMS 2023 tidak memberi pengiktirafan kepada usaha kita selama ini.

"(Dapatan NHMS 2023 menunjukkan) penyakit kencing manis menurun sedikit, tetapi hipertensi dan kolestrol tinggi masih pada paras agak tinggi," katanya menjawab soalan tambahan Senator Dr A Lingeshwaran mengenai tindakan KKM susulan dapatan NHMS 2023 menunjukkan terdapat kegagalan dalam mengawal morbiditi. BERNAMA

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 23
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

MB Johor 'terjah' klinik kesihatan tinjau kesesakan, kemudahan usang

Beri perhatian aduan keadaan Klinik Kesihatan Kulai tidak mampu tampung keperluan pengguna

Oleh Mohamed Farid Noh
farid_noh@bh.com.my

Kulai: Menteri Besar, Datuk Onn Hafiz Ghazi membuat lawatan mengejut ke Klinik Kesihatan Kulai, di sini semalam.

Onn Hafiz berkata, ia susulan aduan pengguna mengenai keadaan fasiliti itu yang usang dengan keperluan yang tidak mencukupi.

Katanya, purata harian pelawat ke Klinik Kesihatan Kulai berjumlah lebih 1,000 orang

setiap hari dan fasiliti itu tidak mampu menampung populasi penduduk di kawasan berkenaan yang semakin bertambah.

"Atas faktor ini, terdapat cadangan untuk pembinaan sebuah klinik kesihatan baharu di daerah Kulai bagi mengurangkan kesesakan.

"Beberapa perkara telah disuarakan oleh pihak penguurusan klinik dan orang awam dalam lawatan mengejut ini termasuk kekurangan aset seperti mesin X-ray dan mesin ultrasound.

"Selain itu, keadaan fasiliti seperti kerusi dan kipas yang telah usang dan rosak di ruang menunggu.

"Laluan keluar masuk kenderaan di klinik yang sesak dan sempit; parkir kenderaan yang terhad dan tidak tersusun di kawasan klinik selain tiada laluan susur yang menyambungkan setiap bangunan di klinik kesihatan," katanya dalam ke-



Onn Hafiz membuat lawatan mengejut ke Klinik Kesihatan Kulai susulan aduan pengguna mengenai keadaan fasiliti itu yang usang dan tidak mencukupi.
(Foto ihsan FB Onn Hafiz Ghazi)

nyataan, semalam.

Usaha selesa isu

Mengulas lanjut, Onn Hafiz berkata, kerajaan negeri akan mem-

bantu sedaya mungkin bagi menyelesaikan isu berkenaan.

"Selain itu, kita akan bekerjasama erat dengan Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) supaya

adanya penyelesaian jangka pendek, sederhana dan panjang bagi memastikan kualiti perkhidmatan kesihatan di seluruh Johor terus cemerlang," katanya.

AKHBAR : SINAR HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 6
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

6

NASIONAL

SINAR HARIAN • JUMAAT 26 JULAI 2024

Sinar
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SIDANG DEWAN NEGARA

TELUS & TULUS • MATA DAN TELINGA RAKYAT • PEMACU PERUBAHAN

Syarikat kurangkan gula bakal diberi pengiktirafan

Sebahagian kempen 'perang ke atas gula' kerana ia penyebab utama peningkatan berat badan

KUALA LUMPUR

Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) akan memberi pengiktirafan *Healthy Choice* kepada syarikat yang mengurangkan kandungan gula dalam produk mereka sebagai sebahagian kempen 'perang ke atas gula'.

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DR DZULKEFLY

pada Khamis.

Beliau menjawab soalan tambahan Senator Datuk A Kesavadas yang ingin tahu pendekatan holistik KKM dalam mengawal pengambilan gula dalam kalangan rakyat Malaysia.

Pada 16 Mei lepas, Dr Dzulkefly berkata, KKM akan melancarkan 'perang' ke atas gula dalam tempoh terdekat sebagai usaha kerajaan mengurangkan peningkatan NCD dalam kalangan rakyat di negara ini.

Berdasarkan data NHMS 2023, kira-kira setengah juta atau 2.5 peratus individu dewasa menghidap empat penyakit NCD termasuk obesiti serta kencing manis, namun satu

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"Penekanan akan diberikan kepada langkah pencegahan di peringkat awal. Kita tahu NHMS 2023 tidak memberi pengiktirafan kepada usaha-usaha kita selama ini.

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Tiga tahap penilaian pokok berisiko

KUALA LUMPUR - Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur (DBKL) mempunyai mekanisme pemantauan berkala terhadap pokok-pokok yang dikenal pasti berisiko dan berusia khususnya di jajaran jalan raya utama ibu kota.

Menteri di Jabatan Perdana Menteri (Wilayah Persekutuan), Dr Zaliha Mustafa berkata, penilaian pokok berisiko mempunyai tiga peringkat iaitu tahap satu melibatkan non-arborist membuat pemeriksaan pokok melalui penilaian visual berdasarkan pengalaman kerja dan pengetahuan dalam bidang arborikultur.

"Tahap dua ialah melalui Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) yang dilaksanakan oleh arborist bertauliah dengan menggunakan standard ditetapkan oleh International Society of Arboriculture (ISA).

"Tahap tiga pula merupakan penilaian terhadap keadaan struktur pokok menggunakan peralatan khas yang dinamakan *resistograph* dan menggunakan khidmat *tree climber* untuk membuat penilaian di setiap bahagian atas pokok," katanya.

Beliau berkata, penilaian dan pemeriksaan pokok bagi tahap satu dijalankan setiap 10 bulan manakala bagi tahap dua dan tiga, ia dilaksanakan di lokasi mempunyai sejarah kegagalan pokok dan pokok berusia yang berisiko tinggi.

Menurutnya, ia termasuk bagi pokok-pokok di lokasi berfrekuensi tinggi berdasarkan penggunaan orang awam dan kawasan padat dengan harta benda berharga.

Zaliha berkata, pemeriksaan VTA yang dilakukan oleh DBKL membolehkan kesihatan dan kesuburan bahagian pokok yang tidak boleh dilihat seperti bahagian akar, batang dan silira pokok diperiksa secara komprehensif dan terperinci.

Beliau berkata demikian ketika menjawab soalan Senator Datuk Mohd Hisamudin Yahaya mengenai bentuk pemantauan berkala oleh DBKL terhadap pokok berisiko dan berusia di ibu kota.

Sementara itu, Zaliha berkata, pihaknya juga telah mengenal pasti spesies pokok yang boleh ditanam bagi menggantikan pokok-pokok berisiko. - Bernama

AKHBAR : SINAR HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 28
RUANGAN : NEGERI

28 NEGERI
SINAR HARIAN • JUMAAT 26 JULAI 2024

TELUS & TULUS
Sinar Harian
JOHOR KELANTAN
TELUS & TULUS • MATA DAN TELINGA RAKYAT • PEMACU

MB Johor buat lawatan mengejut ke klinik

Terima aduan Klinik
Kesihatan Kulai sesak,
fasiliti rosak

Oleh NOR AZURA MD AMIN
KULAI

Kadar purata harian pelawat ke Klinik Kesihatan Kulai yang lebih 1,000 orang menyumbang kepada kesesakan di fasiliti kesihatan berkenaan.

Menteri Besar, Datuk Onn Hafiz Ghazi berkata, atas faktor tersebut, terdapat cadangan untuk pembinaan sebuah klinik kesihatan baharu di daerah Kulai bagi mengurangkan kesesakan.

Beliau yang membuat lawatan mengejut ke Klinik Kesihatan Kulai pada pagi

Khamis, turut berkongsi beberapa aduan yang disuarakan pengurusan klinik dan orang awam.

"Laluan keluar masuk kenderaan di klinik yang sesak dan sempit manakala parkir kenderaan yang terhad serta tidak tersusun di kawasan klinik.

"Seterusnya, keadaan fasiliti seperti kerusi dan kipas yang telah usang dan rosak di ruang menunggu selain tiada laluan susur gajah yang menyambungkan setiap bangunan di klinik kesihatan.

"Kekurangan aset seperti mesin X-ray dan mesin ultrasound turut diterima," katanya dalam kenyataan di Facebook pada Khamis.

Mengulas lanjut, Onn Hafiz berkata, kerajaan negeri akan membantu sedaya mungkin menyelesaikan isu berkenaan melalui kerjasama dengan Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia supaya ada langkah penyelesaian.



Onn Hafiz membuat lawatan mengejut ke Klinik Kesihatan Kulai pada pagi Khamis.

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 5
RUANGAN : NATION

RM250mil spent on outsourcing patients to IJN

10. The Government of the Republic of Armenia
 11. Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 12. Department of International Law
 13. Directorate of Legal Affairs
 14. Section of International Law
 15. Office of the Legal Counsel
 16. Office of the Legal Counsel
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AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 8
RUANGAN : NATION

Sugar-conscious brands get 'Healthy Choice' status

KUALA LUMPUR: Companies that reduce the sugar content in their products will be granted the "Healthy Choice" recognition as part of the Health Ministry's campaign to moderate sugar consumption.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said it is critical to reduce sugar intake among Malaysians because it is one of the main causes of weight gain, leading to various non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes.

"Findings from the National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) 2023 show that one metric has remained constant - high body weight.

"Consumption of sugar is the primary cause. This is one of the reasons MOH (the Ministry of Health) is planning a programme to declare war on sugar. We have not launched it yet, but we have drawn up this programme," he said during an oral Q&A session in the Dewan Negara yesterday.

Bernama reported that he was replying to a supplementary



Yes to less sugar: A poster reminding people to reduce sugar intake is displayed at a cafeteria in Kuala Lumpur. — AZHAR MAHFOF/The Star

question from Senator Datuk A. Kesavadas, who wanted to know about MOH's holistic approach to controlling sugar intake among Malaysians.

On May 16, Dzulkefly said MOH would launch a wage war on sugar soon as part of the govern-

ment's effort to stem the rise of NCDs among the population.

According to NHMS 2023 data, about half a million, or 2.5% of adults suffer from four NCDs, including obesity and diabetes, with one in two Malaysians identified as obese.

Dzulkefly said the ministry is also examining mechanisms to increase access to rapid blood sugar screening so Malaysians can know if they need treatment earlier.

"Controlling NCDs like diabetes is very important because it is lifelong. Therefore, this war on sugar is something we must undertake," he said.

Dzulkefly said the focus is on providing access to preventive healthcare facilities as an early measure to tackle diseases and promote the importance of maintaining health.

"Emphasis will be given on preventive early healthcare. We know NHMS 2023 does not recognise our efforts so far.

"(NHMS 2023 findings show) diabetes has slightly decreased, but hypertension and high cholesterol are still relatively high," he said in reply to a supplementary question from Senator Dr A. Lingeshwaran regarding MOH's actions following NHMS 2023 findings that showed failure in controlling morbidity.

Private hospitals back co-payment system

KUALA LUMPUR: Bank Negara's requirement for insurance and takaful operators (ITOs) to implement a co-payment option for their medical and health insurance and takaful (MHIT) products by September this year is supported by the Association of Private Hospitals Malaysia (APHM).

Its president Datuk Dr Kuljit Singh said the establishment of a co-payment system in healthcare can provide numerous benefits.

"One of the primary advantages is that it encourages patients to be more cautious in their use of healthcare services," he said in a statement yesterday.

Dr Kuljit noted that when patients had to pay a portion of their medical expenses out of

their own pocket, they are more likely to weigh the importance of a doctor's visit or specific treatment.

This could lead to better health outcomes by preventing overuse of resources.

The association also supports Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad who has questioned Bank Negara over the implementation of co-payment criteria for MHIT products to reassure consumers.

Dr Kuljit said the co-payment method can also help cut insurance premiums by eliminating false claims and promoting financial stability in the insurance industry. Insurers can provide a greater range of policies to match clients' budget and healthcare

needs, making medical coverage more affordable for individuals and families.

"Healthcare providers believe that a co-payment system can assist in reducing hospital congestion and improving resource allocation.

"When patients become more aware of their healthcare spending, hospitals may experience up to a 20% reduction in overcrowding, allowing for better resource management and potentially enhanced service delivery," he said.

However, Dr Kuljit acknowledged that the co-payment mechanism presents various challenges. He warned that people from low-income families might defer critical care due to high out-of-

pocket expenses, resulting in poorer health outcomes and higher long-term costs.

This could increase current health disparities, as 30% of low-income individuals avoid necessary care due to costs.

The implementation of co-payments may also increase administrative difficulties for hospitals, potentially resulting in inefficiencies and revenue losses by up to 5%. The added complexity of managing co-payments might confuse customers and undermine their trust in the healthcare system.

Therefore, the adoption of a co-payment system must be properly planned and executed to ensure that access to essential treatments are not compromised.

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 11
RUANGAN : NATION

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SMOKE, VAPOUR AND AEROSOL

Reassessing accessibility to ensure effective tobacco control methods and policies

ACCORDING to the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) Malaysia 2023, the number of e-cigarette users in Malaysia has increased dramatically over the past 12 years.

The prevalence of e-cigarette use among those aged 15-24 increased from 1.1% in 2011 to 8.6% in 2023, representing a 600% rise.

Meanwhile, the overall rate of e-cigarette use in the country has also surged, going from 0.8% in 2011 to 5.8% in 2023 - more than a six-fold increase.

The survey found that 68.1% of Malaysian adults are aware of e-cigarettes, and 8.9% (10.5% of men, 0.8% of women) have used them.

This uptake could be due to inadequate information regarding vapes, e-cigarettes and other alternative tobacco products - how they are distinct and why they should be regulated accordingly.

What's in aerosols?

While smoke is technically an aerosol, not all aerosols are created equal.

Smoke is a complex mixture of solid particles and thousands of chemicals generated at high temperatures when a material burns.

By contrast, an aerosol formed at lower temperatures through vaporisation and condensation is much simpler and contains far fewer harmful chemicals.

This also means that e-cigarettes do not use tobacco - they vaporise an e-liquid solution containing nicotine and flavours when used.

Since there is no burning involved, neither heat-not-burn products nor vapes produce ash or smoke. Instead, they use heating systems to generate an aerosol inhaled by users, classifying heated tobacco products and vapes as "smoke-free" alternatives.

Based on Philip Morris International's (PMI) research, heated tobacco products' (HTP) aerosol contains significantly fewer harmful chemicals compared to cigarette smoke—a claim supported by both targeted and untargeted analyses conducted by the company.

These additional compounds are likely attributed to the flavour system used in HTPs. A toxicological evaluation concluded that these additional compounds do not pose any additional hazard compared to cigarette smoke [1].

PMI Project Management and Knowledge Integration manager Mark Bentley highlighted the significant differences between the two, emphasising the reduced presence of harmful chemicals in heated tobacco aerosol.

From the list of more than 100 harmful and potential harmful constituents (HPHCs), various governments and regulatory bodies have compiled



Smoke from combustion is the primary reason for harmful constituents in cigarettes as it generates thousands of chemicals and solid particles that are linked to various health issues.

priority lists of toxicants that require measurement in cigarette smoke. The most comprehensive list is by the [United States] Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and their list of 93 constituents.

"PMI has analysed, using targeted methods, the concentrations of these 93 constituents in cigarette smoke versus heated tobacco aerosol.

"The results showed a 90-95% reduction for these constituents in heated tobacco aerosol compared to cigarette smoke. This reduction aligns with the findings of other independent studies," he said.

While HTP aerosol contains significantly lower levels of harmful chemicals compared to cigarette smoke, it is important to remember that it is not risk-free.

Exposure from alternatives

For one, PMI had conducted a passive exposure study in Japan to assess the impact of tobacco heating systems (THS) use in real-life settings on users and non-users.

PMI Regional Scientific Engagement Asia director Tomoko Iida stated that, "this study exposed non-smokers to THS aerosol in a restaurant in Tokyo", with the results showing that the use of THS didn't generate environmental smoke and had no adverse effects on indoor air quality [2].

"Also, non-smokers didn't have an increase in exposure to nicotine and tobacco-specific

nitrosamines (TSNA) as a result of passive exposure to the THS aerosol," she said.

In tandem, Japan's Health Ministry had also conducted its own studies and concluded that the "results do not negate the inclusion of HTPs within a regulatory framework for indoor tolerable use from exposure to HTP aerosol, unlike cigarette smoke".

In a reduced emission study published in the Journal of UOEH—the National Institute of Public Health (NIPH) of Japan—concluded that "the concentrations of nicotine in tobacco fillers and the mainstream smoke of IQOS were almost the same as those of conventional combustion cigarettes, while the concentration of TSNA was one fifth with carbon monoxide one hundredth that of conventional combustion cigarettes.

Concerns on accessibility

The GATS Malaysia 2023 survey also revealed that smoking cessation behaviours and health-care utilisation among smokers have remained stagnant over the past year.

This suggests that while e-cigarette use is rising rapidly, efforts to help people quit smoking more broadly have seen limited progress.

Research by Public Health England demonstrated the importance of providing accessible and affordable cessation support and services to help smokers quit.

These include evidence-based interventions such as counsel-

ling, nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) and quitline services. Public awareness campaigns and educational initiatives also play a crucial role in promoting the availability and effectiveness of these resources.

Importantly, those aiming to switch to less harmful alternatives or quit need to ensure adequate access to and use of NRT, as inadequate nicotine replacement or premature discontinuation are both linked to a higher likelihood of relapsing to smoking [3].

While current tobacco regulations restrict the sale of cigarettes and other tobacco products to individuals under age 18, e-cigarettes and vape products containing nicotine remain readily accessible to minors.

This accessibility is a growing concern due to the removal of nicotine from the Poisons Act 1952, which was intended to enable taxation on e-liquids with nicotine but inadvertently opened a loophole for unrestricted sales.

It is crucial to address this regulatory gap and implement measures to restrict the sale of nicotine-containing products to individuals under the legal age.

This can be achieved through various strategies, such as:

- > Enacting legislation that specifically prohibits the sale of nicotine-containing products to minors.

- > Implementing age verification systems at points-of-sale.

- > Raising awareness about the potential risks of tobacco products among youth and parents.

While these products demonstrate significant reductions in harmful chemicals compared to cigarette smoke, it remains important to address issues of accessibility to minors and implement robust regulations to safeguard public health.

By leveraging research findings and raising public awareness about the harm of tobacco use, these strategies have proven effective in reducing smoking rates, preventing initiation, and protecting public health.

Continued research, evaluation, and implementation of evidence-based tobacco control strategies are essential to further progress in reducing the burden of tobacco-related diseases.

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AKHBAR : THE SUN
MUKA SURAT : 4
RUANGAN : NATIONAL

Due diligence **advised** for Platelet-Rich Plasma facials

► Important to ensure dermatologist or doctor has proper certification, experience and equipment to perform procedure

■ BY SIVANISVARRY MORHAN
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PETALING JAYA: A consultant dermatologist has warned Malaysians to check the credentials of those performing Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP) facials before undergoing the procedure, which is growing in popularity.

Dr Teeba Raja (*pic*) said demand for PRP facials in the country has been prompted by Western celebrities and influencers who showed off their rejuvenated skin after the treatment, stirring interest among beauty enthusiasts.

"Certified dermatologists, licensed aesthetic doctors and well-trained medical officers can all perform PRP facials. However, to reduce the risks involved in such procedures, it is important to ensure that the medical professional performing it has the proper certifications and experience."

She said one should ensure that strict safety and hygiene measures are in place, including using clinically sterile equipment, following needle protocols and maintaining a clean clinical environment, while US Food and Drug Administration or equivalent approved equipment and materials should be used.

Teeba said by following these steps, patients can help ensure they receive PRP facials in a safe and hygienic environment.

She said this is important as PRP facials use a patient's blood to rejuvenate the skin. The process starts with drawing a small amount of blood, which is then spun in a centrifuge to separate the platelet-rich plasma, which is then injected or micro-needled into the patient's face.

The growth factors in PRP are believed to stimulate collagen production, improve skin texture and promote a youthful appearance.

A survey by *theSun* around the Klang Valley showed that PRP facial prices differ according to the expertise of the specialists and range from



Teeba said the effectiveness of the procedure varies according to the individual and the technique used. — PIC COURTESY OF VINE MEDICAL AESTHETICS

RM700 to RM2,000 per session.

Multiple sessions are often recommended for optimal results.

Teeba said the demographics of patients seeking PRP facials are quite diverse and that a higher number of individuals aged between 25 and 45 is typical.

"Both men and women show interest in this procedure, even though it is predominantly women who go for it."

"Patients are generally those keen to maintain their skin health and appearance."

However, Teeba said the effectiveness of the procedure varies according to the individual and the technique used. Factors such as the patient's health, PRP quality and practitioner's skill can influence the outcome.

Another consultant dermatologist and internal medicine physician, Dr Rani Manohari Kuppusamy, said the regenerative properties of PRP are not limited to facial aesthetics.

She said PRP has been used in various medical fields, including orthopaedics and dentistry, for its ability to promote healing and tissue regeneration.

"This cross-disciplinary success has added a layer of credibility to its use in cosmetic dermatology. Since the treatment uses the patient's blood, the risk of allergic reactions or adverse effects is significantly reduced compared with synthetic fillers or other cosmetic procedures."

As with any trending cosmetic procedure, PRP facials come with their share of controversies.

According to the Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia, the use of blood and blood products as medicine is allowed if there are no alternative treatments available.

Medical experts must also confirm that the blood-derived procedure is effective.

Under these conditions, Islam permits the use of blood and blood products, including PRP, for "medical purposes".

However, Federal Territory mufti Luqman Abdullah previously emphasised that this does not include use for cosmetic purposes.

Rani Manohari said this may be because PRP facials lack extensive scientific research and standard protocols.

"While some studies support the efficacy of PRP facials, others highlight the need for more rigorous, large-scale clinical trials to establish consistent results and safety profiles," she said.

AKHBAR : THE SUN
MUKA SURAT : 10
RUANGAN : SPEAK UP

Salute our truly unsung heroes

UNDERFUNDED, understaffed, underpaid and underappreciated. These are the four words that the then director-general of health, Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah, chose to describe the nation's public healthcare service and the thousands of men and women who manage it.

"You are our unsung heroes of the nation," he said in his New Year message on Facebook in January 2020, just before the world was struck by the Covid-19 pandemic that only subsided three years later.

We cannot imagine the physical and mental pressure they went through during the three-year pandemic period.

Their selfless sacrifices in saving the lives of millions at even greater risks to their health with the Covid virus spreading then, must be rewarded in ways the government knows best how to.

Of all the 1.7 million civil servants that we have, these men and women under the Health Ministry are the ones who work the hardest and the longest hours in a day, well beyond their call of duty, yet we hardly hear them bragging about it.

It is all in a day's work, with little appreciation except by members of the public who have sought their services either at outpatient clinics or when they are warded at hospitals.

Please do not take the virtually free service, often the fee charged is a mere token of RM1 for registration, for granted without being conscious of what we all can do - in fact, should do - to curb the mind-blowing costs of public



sector healthcare.

It is in the interest of all Malaysians to help curb the "exploding" healthcare costs by being more health-conscious and leading a healthy lifestyle.

It is becoming increasingly obvious from statistics that by and large, Malaysians are an unhealthy lot as reflected in the long queues at hospitals and clinics across the nation.

In the 2024 Budget presented in Parliament last year, the Health Ministry was allocated RM41.22 billion, up by 13.5% from RM36.3 billion in 2023.

Even with this huge budget, the second highest after the Education Ministry, it is regarded as underfunded by Noor Hisham.

No less than Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad, when he was health minister for the first time in 2020 before being reappointed last December, who said the ministry's expenditure could double to RM80 billion annually at the rate Malaysians are falling sick.

If left unchecked, the costs could become unsustainable, especially in times of economic slowdown.

The latest figures show that eight million patients are seeking treatment at over 140 government hospitals and thousands of clinics annually. The numbers on the nation's sick list are akin to a time bomb ticking away.

Hospitals are one of the critical public utilities that operate round-the-clock without a break, unlike most others that operate five days a week with weekends off for the staff.

Because of this, maintenance of facilities, especially equipment and machine fatigue and



The selfless sacrifices of the public healthcare service in saving millions of lives deserve appreciation.
- ADIB RAWI
YAHYA/
SUNPIC

breakdowns are serious issues.

The *Star* reported on Wednesday that heart surgeries at the Serdang Heart Centre, one of the largest cardiology centres, have ground to a halt once again for over a month after its four non-functional operating theatres underwent major repair works.

The closure affects some 50 patients scheduled for heart surgeries while another 1,000 are on the waiting list. This is yet another example of schedular maintenance that has yet to be institutionalised as a culture in Malaysia as all too often the authorities tend to be reactive instead of being proactive, although maintenance is cheaper than repairs.

Those who have been to hospital wards when visiting friends and relatives can see the

over-crowding and the overworked staff to appreciate their sacrifices.

It is more than a sacrifice. Some years ago, I broke my left wrist after falling on a slippery floor and was warded for a few days for an operation at Selayang Hospital. It was an eye-opener for me on the sheer quantity, quality, integrity and sanctity of their selfless service to the nation and the rakyat.

At the end of the day, the onus is on us Malaysians at large to keep the costs of healthcare under control by keeping in mind always that "Prevention is better than cure".

As the saying goes, eat our food as medicine and not medicine as our food.

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