

AKHBAR : KOSMO
MUKA SURAT : 7
RUANGAN : NEGARA

Kerajaan digesa naikkan cukai eksais, harga minimum rokok

PETALING JAYA - Gabungan Persatuan Pengamal Perubatan Swasta, Malaysia (FPMPAM) menggesa kerajaan menaikkan cukai eksais dan harga minimum rokok menerusi Bajet 2025 akan datang.

Presiden FPMPAM, Dr Shanmuganathan Ganeson, berkata, pihaknya yakin tindakan itu membantu mengekang penggunaan tembakau, meningkatkan hasil kerajaan dan mengumpul dana untuk inisiatif kawalan tembakau.

"Harga minimum rokok inasib tidak berubah iaitu RM12 sebungkus sejak 2020. Naikkan ia ke RM13 atau RM13.50 akan membantu mencapai matlamat kesihatan awam negara terutamanya dalam kalangan belia dan kumpulan berpendapatan

rendah.

"Ia juga dapat menghalang perokok baru daripada terjebak tabiat itu dan menyokong hasil kesihatan jangka panjang untuk penduduk," tambahnya.

Gesaan itu turut disokong oleh Persatuan Perubatan Ketagihan, Malaysia yang menegaskan bahawa ia penting ke arah mengurangkan kadar merokok dan meningkatkan hasil kesihatan awam di Malaysia.

Presidennya, Dr. Steven Chow, berkata, jika digabungkan dengan usaha kawalan tembakau yang lebih luas, ia akan membantu melindungi generasi akan datang daripada kesan rokok.

"Ia sejajar dengan komitmen negara untuk menjaga kesihatan dan kesejahteraan rakyatnya," ujarnya.

AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO
MUKA SURAT : 21
RUANGAN : BISNES

Kerajaan digesa naikkan cukai eksais, harga rokok

Kuala Lumpur Persatuan Perubatan Ketagihan Malaysia (AMAM) bersama Persekutuan Persatuan Pengamal Perubatan Swasta Malaysia (FPMPAM) menggesa kerajaan untuk menaikkan cukai eksais dan harga minimum bagi rokok.

Ia sebagai langkah penting dalam mengurangkan penggunaan tembakau serta meningkatkan hasil pendapatan kerajaan untuk inisiatif kawalan tembakau.

Presiden FPMPAM, Dr Shammuganathan Ganeson berkata, harga rokok yang kekal pada RM12 sepeket sejak 2020 sudah tidak relevan.

"Kami mendesak kerajaan untuk menaikkan harga minimum rokok kepada RM13 atau RM13.50. Langkah ini penting untuk mengukuhkan keberkesanan langkah kawalan tembakau dan seterusnya mengurangkan kadar merokok di negara ini," katanya dalam kenyataan.

Menurutnya, peningkatan cukai eksais ke atas rokok adalah kunci kepada mencapai matlamat kesihatan awam negara.

"Cukai yang lebih tinggi terbukti dapat mengurangkan kecenderungan merokok, terutamanya dalam kalangan belia dan mereka yang berpendapatan rendah.

"Dengan menaikkan kos rokok, kita dapat menurunkan penggunaan, mencegah perokok baharu, dan menyokong hasil kesihatan

jangka panjang bagi rakyat," katanya.

Katanya, beliau mencadangkan agar kerajaan melaksanakan sistem cukai yang berstruktur, yang akan meningkat secara tahunan pada kadar tetap.

"Pendekatan ini menyediakan kaedah jangka panjang yang mampan untuk mengurangkan penggunaan tembakau, sambil menghantar mesej jelas bahawa merokok membawa akibat kesihatan dan kewangan yang serius," katanya.

AKHBAR : SINAR HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 12
RUANGAN : NASIONAL



FPMPAM dan AMAM menggesa kerajaan untuk menaikkan cukai eksais serta harga minimum rokok bagi tujuan mengekang penggunaan tembakau.

Gesa kerajaan naikan cukai eksais, harga rokok

SHAH ALAM - Kerajaan digesa untuk menaikkan cukai eksais dan harga minimum rokok bagi tujuan mengekang penggunaan tembakau serta meningkatkan hasil negara.

Presiden Gabungan Persatuan Pengamal Perubatan Swasta Malaysia (FPMPAM), Dr Shanmuganathan Ganeson berkata, gesaan tersebut dilakukan susulan harga minimum rokok tidak berubah pada RM12 sekotak sejak tahun 2020.

"Menaikkan harga minimum kepada paras yang lebih tepat iaitu RM13 atau RM13.50 akan membantu mengukuhkan keberkesanan langkah kawalan tembakau dan seterusnya mengurangkan kadar merokok."

"Sementara itu, meningkatkan cukai eksais terhadap rokok juga penting untuk mencapai matlamat kesihatan awam negara kerana ia terbukti dapat mengurangkan kadar merokok," katanya dalam satu kenyataan bersama Persatuan Perubatan Ketagihatan Malaysia (AMAM) pada Isnin.

Pada masa sama, Presiden AMAM, Steven Chow turut menggesa kerajaan untuk memasukkan pelarasan itu dalam Belanjawan 2025 sebagai langkah penting mengurangkan kadar merokok dan meningkatkan hasil kesihatan awam di Malaysia.

"Tindakan ini (menaikkan harga rokok dan cukai eksais) apabila digabungkan dengan usaha kawalan tembakau yang lebih luas akan membantu melindungi generasi akan datang daripada kesan bahaya merokok."

"Usaha ini sejajar dengan komitmen negara untuk menjaga kesihatan dan kesejahteraan rakyatnya," jelas Steven.

AKHBAR : SINAR HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 22
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Penyakit kelamin: Pengetahuan, sikap dan amalan pelajar prasiswazah

TREND peningkatan penyakit kelamin dalam kalangan dewasa muda berusia 18 hingga 26 tahun merupakan isu yang membimbangkan kerana mereka adalah antara penyumbang utama kes di seluruh dunia.

Penyakit ini tidak mempunyai tanda dan gejala yang jelas menjadikan ia lebih sukar untuk dikesan. Tambahan pula, pemikiran mereka juga masih tidak matang sepenuhnya termasuk keupayaan bagi membezakan di antara risiko dan ganjaran.

Oleh sebab itu, mereka cenderung aktif secara seksual dan terlibat dalam tingkah laku berisiko tinggi.

Dari segi perspektif rakyat Malaysia, pandangan tentang penyakit kelamin adalah amat rumit.

Walaupun terdapat peningkatan kepelbagaian maklumat mengenai penyakit kelamin yang boleh diperoleh melalui kempen kesihatan awam secara dalam talian, masih terdapat lagi sejumlah besar stigma dalam masyarakat.

Ini boleh mengakibatkan ramai yang sukar mendapatkan ujian mengenal pasti dan rawatan disebabkan oleh diskriminasi terhadap pesakit yang diketahui atau dikenali menghidap penyakit kelamin.

Malangnya, individu yang tidak mengetahui tentang status penyakit kelamin mereka kerana tidak melakukan ujian akan menyumbang kepada jangkitan baru yang ketara.

Di samping itu, diagnosis lewat penyakit kelamin telah terbukti mengakibatkan peningkatan morbiditi, kematian dan kos penjagaan kesihatan.

Berdasarkan kajian Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, seramai 1,000 remaja dari serendah umur 13 hingga 17 tahun disahkan positif bagi penyakit kelamin seperti sifilis, gonorea, syankroid dan HIV dari tahun 2018 hingga 2022.

Dalam kalangan dewasa muda termasuk pelajar prasiswazah di universiti, masih terdapat jurang pengetahuan terhadap penyakit kelamin.

Baru-baru ini Menteri Pengajian Tinggi, Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir menyatakan bahawa terdapat peningkatan yang membimbangkan bilangan jangkitan HIV dalam kalangan pelajar pengajian tinggi berumur 18 hingga 25 tahun.

Berdasarkan maklumat kes yang dilaporkan kepada Kementerian Kesihatan, 214 pelajar di institusi pengajian tinggi awam atau swasta telah dijangkiti HIV pada 2020.

Angka itu menurun sedikit pada 2021 kepada 186 individu tetapi menunjukkan trend menaik pada 2022 dan 2023 dengan 221 dan 224 individu.

Sehubungan itu, penilaian tahap pengetahuan, sikap dan amalan mereka adalah penting dalam mengawal peningkatan kes penyakit kelamin.

** Dr Vanitha Mariappan ialah Pensyarah Kanan Program Sains Bioperubatan, Pusat Kajian Toksikologi dan Risiko Kesihatan (CORE), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM).*

AKHBAR : UTUSAN MALAYSIA
MUKA SURAT : 18
RUANGAN : FORUM

Jangan biar rakyat Malaysia terus terjerat masalah obesiti

SAUDARA PENGARANG,

OBESITI merupakan isu kesihatan yang semakin serius di Malaysia. Peningkatan kadar obesiti boleh membawa kepada risiko penyakit kronik seperti diabetes, hipertensi dan penyakit jantung.

Salah satu punca utama adalah gaya hidup tidak aktif yang diamalkan ramai individu. Kemajuan teknologi mengurangkan keperluan untuk aktiviti fizikal dalam kehidupan harian. Oleh itu, penting untuk masyarakat meningkatkan tahap aktiviti fizikal melalui senaman dan sukan.

Tabiat pemakanan yang tidak sihat turut menyumbang kepada masalah obesiti. Pengambilan makanan segera dan minuman bergula tinggi menjadi pilihan ramai, terutamanya golongan muda. Pendidikan mengenai pemakanan seimbang dan kesedaran tentang kesan negatif makanan tidak sihat perlu dipertingkatkan.

Peranan ibu bapa sangat penting dalam mendidik anak-anak mengenai gaya hidup sihat sejak usia muda. Dengan memberikan contoh yang baik dan menyediakan makanan berkhasiat di rumah, ibu bapa dapat membentuk tabiat positif dalam diri anak-anak. Pendidikan awal ini akan membantu mereka membuat pilihan yang lebih baik sepanjang hidup.

Majikan juga boleh memainkan peranan dalam menggalakkan gaya hidup sihat di tempat kerja. Mereka boleh menyediakan kemudahan seperti gimnasium, mengadakan program kesihatan atau menggalakkan waktu rehat yang aktif. Langkah-langkah ini bukan sahaja meningkatkan kesihatan pekerja tetapi juga produktiviti syarikat.

Sementara kerajaan boleh mengarahkan syarikat pengeluar dan premis makanan segera untuk mengurangkan kandungan gula dalam produk. Langkah pengawalan ini dapat membantu mengurangkan pengambilan gula berlebihan.

Selain itu, kerajaan boleh memberi insentif khas kepada syarikat pengeluar makanan sihat dan premis makanan yang mengutamakan menu sihat. Insentif seperti pengecualian cukai atau sokongan pemasaran akan menggalakkan lebih banyak syarikat untuk terlibat dalam industri makanan sihat, memberi lebih banyak pilihan kepada pengguna.

Pendidikan kesihatan perlu diperkukuhkan di sekolah dan institusi pendidikan. Penekanan harus diberikan kepada kepentingan pemakanan seimbang dan aktiviti fizikal. Dengan pengetahuan yang betul, generasi muda dapat membuat pilihan yang lebih baik untuk kesihatan mereka dan mengelakkan risiko obesiti.

Komuniti boleh mengadakan pelbagai program kesihatan untuk meningkatkan kesedaran dan penyertaan masyarakat dalam aktiviti fizikal. Penglibatan secara kolektif akan menjadikan usaha mengurangkan obesiti lebih berkesan.

Dengan usaha bersama, kita dapat membentuk Malaysia yang lebih sihat dan cergas untuk masa depan yang lebih baik.

AZIZUL AZUDIN AZIZUL RAHMAN
Alam Impian, Shah Alam

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES
MUKA SURAT : 14
RUANGAN : LIFE & TIMES

Vaping not a safer alternative to smoking

IN recent years, the rise of vaping and e-cigarettes has created a new frontier in the battle against smoking.

Traditional cigarette use has seen a decline from 21.3 per cent in 2022 to 19 per cent in 2023 according to the National Health and Morbidity Survey 2023.

However, the allure of e-cigarettes and vaping devices has captivated a younger audience, nearly doubling from 9.8 per cent in 2017 to 14.9 per cent in 2022 according to the National Health and Morbidity Survey 2022 (Adolescent Health Survey).

This shift, however, is not without consequences — both for the smoker and those around them. The shift from conventional cigarette smoking to vaping and e-cigarettes comes with a cost.

While there's no direct link to lung cancer, e-cigarettes contain acrolein, which can cause acute lung injury, popcorn lung, asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).

Acrolein has been linked to changes in cellular deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) that can increase the risk of cancer, says consultant respiratory and internal medicine physician at Sunway Medical Centre Dr Kow Ken Siong.

The increase in vaping and e-cigarette use among young people is concerning, says Dr Kow, who is also a clinical associate professor at Sunway University's School of Medicine and Life Sciences.

"These sleek devices are often promoted as safer alternatives with various flavours, making them appear harmless and trendy. However, this perception is dangerously misleading, leading many into a trap."

Dr Kow says vaping and e-cigarette devices heat nicotine extracted from tobacco, along with flavourings and other additives, and users inhale this aerosol into their lungs.

While it may eliminate some harmful combustion byproducts, it does introduce a new array of chemicals, including various unregulated chemicals from questionable sources, ranging from cleaning agents to pesticides and even methanol, one of

the main ingredients for rocket fuel, which may also be very harmful.

Recent studies have also linked vaping and e-cigarettes to severe lung injuries, increased risk for tobacco and other substance use, mental health problems, pulmonary and cardiovascular disease, and unintentional injuries among adolescents.

Dr Kow says starting smoking young has greater health impacts as lungs mature at about 20 to 25 years of age.

"With vaping, we are treading on dangerous ground where youths are unwitting guinea pigs in an uncontrolled experiment."

A CONCERN FOR ALL

Many young smokers and vapers are under the misconception that their choices affect only themselves.

However, the reality is starkly different. Secondhand smoke is a silent assailant, infiltrating the lungs of those around it.

Secondhand smoke, a combination of smoke from the burning end of a cigarette and the smoke exhaled by smokers, contains over 7,000 chemicals, hundreds of which are toxic and

about 70 chemicals that can cause cancer.

Vaping, often marketed as a safer alternative, isn't exempt from scrutiny.

"E-cigarette vapour contains nicotine, ultrafine particles, and volatile organic compounds. While it might lack some harmful chemicals found in traditional cigarettes, it's far from benign."

Children and pregnant women are particularly vulnerable to the effects of

secondhand smoke, which can lead to respiratory infections, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), and poor cognitive performance.

Furthermore, the often-overlooked threat of thirdhand smoke extends beyond the immediate dangers of secondhand exposure. This residue, which contains nicotine and chemicals, clings to surfaces for months, releasing toxins and carcinogens.

Thirdhand smoke embeds itself in carpets, furniture, and even clothing. Over time, these residues can react with indoor pollutants, forming carcinogenic compounds.

This lingering menace poses risks, especially to infants who crawl on carpets or individuals who spend extended periods in contaminated environments that contain more than 200 chemicals.

"Cleaning or airing out rooms isn't sufficient. Comprehensive measures are required to eradicate these toxic

Vaping is often touted as a safer alternative to smoking, but the facts show otherwise.
PICTURE CREDIT: FREEPIK.

SMOKING AND VAPING CESSATION

THERE are several effective treatment options for smoking cessation, including nicotine replacement therapies (such as patches, gums, and lozenges), prescription medications, and behavioural counselling, which may increase the chances of successfully quitting smoking and helping young adults.

Dr Kow says while quitting smoking can be challenging, with the right support and treatment plan, it's achievable.

Those who want to quit should consult their doctor who can help tailor a cessation plan that best suits their needs and improves their chances of long-term success.

remnants," says Dr Kow.

Awareness is the first step towards change. We need to debunk myths and present hard facts when educating children and adolescents about the dangers of smoking and vaping.

Moreover, the importance of creating smoke-free and vape-free environments to prevent the risks of secondhand and thirdhand smoke is crucial. Homes, cars and public spaces should be smoke-free sanctuaries.

meera@nst.com.my



The shift from cigarettes to vaping among young people comes with its other consequences. PICTURE CREDIT: FREEPIK.



Children and pregnant women are particularly vulnerable to the effects of secondhand smoke. PICTURE CREDIT: GPOINTSTUDIO • FREEPIK.

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 14
RUANGAN : NATION

14 Nation

THE STAR, TUESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2024

ABOUT a month ago I read the sad news of a doctor in Sabah who committed suicide. I also know of an intern from my university who was said to have committed suicide while working as a houseman in a Penang hospital about two years ago.

Both these tragic cases were allegedly connected to bullying by seniors in their workplaces.

I remember that a committee was set up, headed by a retired senior civil servant, to look into the incident in Penang; the committee did not find much issue with bullying as a main concern.

I read the findings back then and felt some concerns about the methodology used – I believe it would not have unearthed the actual cause, and the findings merely watered down what could be major faults in the medical practice culture at public hospitals.

In July, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi revealed some horrendous figures about suicidal deaths in Malaysia: There has been an average of about 1,000 deaths over five years, with a total of more than 4,000.

What is happening to our people that they would do this?

We are a country rich in kinship, a sociable people with networks of friends, and yet the number of people tragically ending their lives is increasing.

I do not know what it feels like to be so despondent but I do know what it is to struggle with mental health.

A while back I attended an event at a church in Petaling Jaya, Selangor, where a group of social activists were trying to help people in the B40 (lower income) group come to terms with adulthood in Malaysia, with a specific focus on racial integration.

Resetting Malaysia for better mental health

Why are so many people suffering from depression and even committing suicide? This columnist believes we need a societal change to help.

MOHD
TAJUDDIN
MOHD RASDI



Over the top

I was a speaker, and I happened to mention that I once struggled for six years with panic and anxiety disorders, as well as agoraphobia. I got through those years with help from a psychiatrist and much learning that helped me change my perspective on life ("How I learned to 'waste' my time", *Over the Top*, *The Star*, Sept 28, 2021; online at bit.ly/star-panic).

One of the facilitators attending that talk recently asked me to give one of the keynote speeches at an event to raise awareness of the work done by the Reset Minda approach.

The organisation is an NGO called Kelab Minda Malaysia that trains amateur counsellors to be the first-line help through social media for people suffering from depression and suicidal ideation.

The number of people who suffer like this is high – one report I

came across said that 30% of the Malaysian population suffers from depression!

How do we help such people when we only have about 500 qualified therapists in the country? ("A shortage of psychiatrists", *The Star*, Jan 29, 2024; online at tinyurl.com/bdcw5fe.) The recommended World Health Organisation ratio is one psychiatrist serving 10,000 people. Malaysia has less than one (0.52) psychiatrist per 100,000 persons.

I consider the issue of mental health to be directly related to our failings as a society.

For instance, we condone politicians using harsh language and declaring Malaysians of different races or faiths as enemies of their religion, and using derogatory names like "nonya tua" and "kaf** har**". These politicians have large followings on social media with hundreds of thousands liking these kinds of racist and extremist speech. I feel this is not mentally healthy, surely?

And then there is our education system that treats everyone as potential worker bees in industry.

After raising five children and teaching young adults for 40 years, I have yet to see or hear of classes or courses that prepare students mentally and emotionally for adulthood and joining the

workforce, or for dealing with the challenges of married life.

I believe there are some courses offering financial advice but with a high percentage of young people in heavy credit card debt – 50,000 according to the Credit Counselling and Management Agency (AKPK) – I have to wonder how effective they are.

In keeping with our overwhelmingly industry-led and profit-driven society, it is not surprising that during the Covid-19 pandemic, banks had to be ordered by the government to provide a year-long moratorium (though, of course, the stalled interest was recalculated).

The pandemic triggered a mental health crisis we – and the rest of the world – are still struggling with, and one of the reasons identified is the inability to cope financially. But we have to secure loans for cars and houses that do not have moratoriums embedded for sickness and job displacements.

This is why I think we need to reset society, to move away from the industrial approach and towards living in a more humane manner when it comes to work and education. At the very least, we must make fundamental changes in our education systems, in our financial institutions, and in our work-career expectations.

And we should also support groups like Kelab Minda Malaysia and have more of them to provide a friendly voice when our thoughts circle around despair and destruction.

Kelab Minda calls its approach Reset Minda.

I call it Reset Malaysia. (For information on the Oct 19 Kelab Minda event at which the columnist will be speaking, go to instagram.com/p/C1KrdSz66r.)

Those suffering from problems can reach out to the Mental Health Psychosocial Support Service at 03-2935 9935 or 014-322 3392; Tallan Kasih at 15999 or 019-261 5999 on WhatsApp; Jakim's (Department of Islamic Development Malaysia) family, social and community care centre at 0111-959 8214 on WhatsApp; and Befrienders Kuala Lumpur at 03-7627 2929 or go to befrienders.org.my/centre-in-malaysia for a full list of numbers nationwide and operating hours, or email sam@befrienders.org.my.

Prof Dr Mohd Tajuddin Mohd Rasdi is Professor of Architecture at the Tan Sri Omar Centre for Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Studies at UCSI University. The views expressed here are entirely the writer's own.

AKHBAR : THE SUN
MUKA SURAT : 12
RUANGAN : HEALTH

IN recent years, the rise of vaping and e-cigarettes has created a new frontier in the battle against smoking.

While traditional cigarette use has seen a decline from 21.3% in 2022 to 19% in 2023, the allure of e-cigarettes and vaping devices has captivated a younger audience, nearly doubling from 9.8% in 2017 to 14.9% in 2022.

This shift, however, is not without consequences – for the smoker and those around them. The shift from conventional cigarette smoking to vaping and e-cigarettes comes with a cost.

While there is no direct link to lung cancer, e-cigarettes contains acrolein, which can cause acute lung injury, popcorn lung, asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Acrolein has been linked to changes in cellular DNA that can increase the risk of cancer but do not prove that people who vape necessarily will develop lung cancer.

Vibrant flavours, colours bring hidden dangers of vaping among the young

The increase in vaping and e-cigarette use among young people is concerning. These sleek devices are often promoted as safer alternatives with various flavours, making them appear harmless and trendy. However, this perception is dangerously misleading, leading many into a trap.

Vaping and e-cigarette devices heat nicotine extracted from tobacco, along with flavourings as well as other additives and users inhale this aerosol into their lungs. While it may eliminate some harmful combustion byproducts, it introduces a new array of chemicals, including various unregulated chemicals from questionable sources ranging from cleaning agents to pesticides and even methanol, one of the main ingredients for rocket fuel, which may also be harmful.

Recent studies have also linked vaping and e-cigarettes to severe lung injuries, increased risk for tobacco and other substance use, mental health problems, pulmonary and cardiovascular disease and unintentional injuries among adolescents.

Starting to smoke young has greater health impacts as lungs mature at about 20-25 years old.

Secondhand smoke could silently be risking your loved one's health

Many young smokers and vapers operate under the misconception that their choices affect only themselves. However, the reality is starkly different. Secondhand smoke are silent assailants, infiltrating the lungs of those around them.

Secondhand smoke, a combination of smoke from the burning end of a cigarette and the smoke exhaled by smokers, contains over 7,000 chemicals, hundreds of which are toxic and about 70 that can cause cancer.

Vaping, often marketed as a safer alternative, is not exempt from scrutiny. E-cigarette vapour contains nicotine, ultrafine particles and volatile organic compounds. While it might lack some harmful chemicals found in traditional cigarettes, it is far from benign.

Children and pregnant women are particularly vulnerable to the effects of secondhand smoke, which can lead to respiratory infections, sudden infant death syndrome and poor cognitive performance.

Imagine a child developing asthma or an elderly family member facing cardiovascular issues all because of passive exposure. It is heart-wrenching.

Lingering menace of thirdhand smoke

The often-overlooked threat of thirdhand smoke extends beyond the immediate dangers of secondhand exposure. This residue, which contains nicotine and chemicals, clings to surfaces for months, releasing toxins and carcinogens.

Thirdhand smoke embeds itself in carpets, furniture and even, clothing. Over time, these residues can react with indoor pollutants, forming carcinogenic compounds.

This lingering menace poses risks, especially



Every puff sends ripples far and wide, impacting lives we may never realise.

Hidden threats of smoking, vaping

► In conjunction with World Lung Day tomorrow, let's understand risks to smokers and their loved ones through secondhand, thirdhand exposure

to infants who crawl on carpets or individuals who spend extended periods in contaminated environments that contain more than 200 chemicals. Cleaning or airing out rooms is not sufficient. Comprehensive measures are required to eradicate these toxic remnants.

As parents and individuals, awareness is the first step towards change, especially comprehensive education campaigns targeting the youth and general public across all ages.

The importance of creating smoke-free and vape-free environments is to help prevent the risks of secondhand and thirdhand smoke exposure.

Homes, cars and public spaces should be sanctuaries. We have seen other countries implementing smoke-free policies with success that has shown positive results that are encouraging. At the end of the day, protecting our loved ones from these unseen threats is a

collective responsibility.

Smoking, vaping cessation is possible

There are several effective treatment options for smoking cessation, including nicotine replacement therapies (such as patches, gums and lozenges), prescription medications and behavioural counselling, which may increase the chances of successfully quitting smoking and help young adults.

Quitting smoking can be challenging but with the right support and treatment plan, it is achievable.

This article is contributed by Associate Professor Dr Kow Ken Siong, clinical associate professor, consultant respiratory and internal medicine physician at Sunway Medical Centre and School of Medicine and Life Sciences, Sunway University.

MPox: HEALTH MINISTRY STEPS UP SCREENING AT ALL ENTRY POINTS

The Health Ministry has stepped up health screenings at all border entry points to prevent the spread of monkeypox (Mpox). Deputy Health Minister Datuk Lukanisman Awang Sauni said the effort was intensified following a case involving a man who was confirmed to have contracted Mpox. He said screenings are being conducted according to procedures, including body temperature checks and individuals suspected of showing Mpox symptoms will be taken for further screening and examination. "The ministry is also prioritising the health of healthcare workers and will issue a statement regarding vaccines to prevent the infection. So far, the infection remains under control and the ministry is focusing its attention, particularly on high-risk groups," he told reporters after participating in the Kelantan-level Clean and Smoke-Free Premises Walkabout Programme at Kota Bharu last Saturday. – Bernama

NEW STUDY REINFORCES THEORY COVID EMERGED AT CHINESE MARKET

A study on the origin of Covid-19 provided new evidence last Thursday, supporting the theory that humans first caught the virus from infected animals at a Chinese market in late 2019. Nearly five years after Covid first emerged, the international community has not been able to determine with certainty exactly where the virus came from. The first cases were detected in the Wuhan in late 2019 but there have been bitter disputes between proponents of the two main theories. One is that the virus leaked from a Wuhan lab which studied related viruses, while the other is that people caught Covid from an infected wild animal being sold at a local market. The scientific community has favoured the latter theory but the controversy has rumbled on. – AFP