

FOR patients battling heart conditions, the evolution of treatments continues to offer hope, especially with the advent of innovative procedures like Transcatheter Pulmonary Valve Implantation (TPVI).

This minimally invasive procedure has transformed the way heart valve issues are managed, offering patients a chance at improved quality of life with faster recovery times.

• National Heart Institute (IJN) Paediatric and Congenital Heart Centre (PCHC) consultant paediatric cardiologist and head Dr Marhisham Che Mood, shares insights into this groundbreaking procedure and how it's helping patients with congenital heart disease and other heart conditions.

Pulmonary valve disease is a condition where the pulmonary valve, which regulates blood flow from the heart to the lungs, does not function properly.

This can result from congenital heart defects, infections, degenerative conditions or as a long term known complication of previous congenital heart surgeries.

Studies indicate that congenital heart disease, which often necessitates pulmonary valve intervention, affects approximately one in 100 newborns globally.

Patients with pulmonary valve disease often experience symptoms such as shortness of breath, fatigue, swelling in the legs or abdomen and irregular heartbeats.

If left untreated, the condition can lead to severe complications in severe cases, including heart failure, arrhythmias, and reduced oxygen levels in the

A LIFE-SAVING SHIFT IN CONGENITAL HEART TREATMENT



Minimally invasive procedures like TPVI are transforming congenital heart care, giving patients faster recovery and renewed hope. — 123rf.com

body.

"TPVI is a life-changing procedure that allows us to replace a defective pulmonary valve without open-heart surgery.

"The procedure uses state-of-the-art valves such as the Melody valve, Venus P valve, and Edward Sapien valve. The choice of valve depends on the patient's specific needs and suitability," says Dr Marhisham.

The TPVI procedure involves threading a catheter through the femoral vein to the heart, where the new valve is implanted with-

out the need for a surgical incision.

This offers significant advantages, including shorter hospital stays, quicker recovery times and less post-operative discomfort compared to traditional open-heart surgery.

Unlike conventional valve replacement surgery, which requires stopping the heart and using a heart-lung machine, TPVI is performed while the heart continues to beat, significantly reducing surgical risks.

Pulmonary valve disease, if

untreated, can severely impact heart function and overall well-being.

Patients at risk include those born with congenital defects such as Tetralogy of Fallot – a condition requiring pulmonary valve repair or replacement later in life.

Reports suggest that approximately 50% of individuals who undergo childhood heart surgery for congenital defects will require reintervention in adulthood.

By offering a minimally invasive solution, TPVI has become a preferred option for many, reducing hospital stays from several weeks to just a few days and allowing most patients to return to normal activities within weeks.

The Melody valve, Venus P valve, and Edward Sapien valve are each designed to cater to different patient conditions and anatomies, providing a customised solution for those in need.

Dr Marhisham emphasises that each patient's suitability is carefully evaluated to ensure the best possible outcome.

A range of factors, including the patient's age, anatomy and the specific condition of their pulmonary valve, are considered before the most appropriate valve option is recommended.

As part of its broader commitment to heart health, IJN also

marked World Heart Day 2025 with a five-day programme at The Curve from Sept 24 to 28.

Themed "It's Not Just a Game, It's About Your Heart", the event combined family-friendly activities with practical education on cardiovascular well-being.

Highlights included free heart screenings such as electrocardiograms (ECG) and echocardiograms (ECHO), which provided the public with insights into their heart health.

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) demonstrations were also conducted to equip participants with life-saving skills that could make a difference in emergency situations.

The event featured physical activities such as K-pop Zumba and the Capteh Challenge to show participants how staying active is key to heart health.

For children, heart-themed games and colouring activities offered a fun way to learn about healthy habits.

A Wholesome Meal Challenge further underscored the importance of nutrition, showing how balanced and budget-friendly meals can support cardiovascular health.

By blending education with interactive activities, the event highlighted the importance of combining awareness, lifestyle choices and preventive care for improved heart health.

Hidden plight of men facing domestic violence

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► Psychological abuse far more common among male victims: Academic

■ BY KIRTINEE RAMESH
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PETALING JAYA: Domestic violence against men is a silent crisis in Malaysia, with many victims suffering humiliation and psychological abuse in secret until it erupts as depression, burnout or even violence, said Universiti Teknologi Malaysia senior psychology officer Dr Zulfikar Ahmad.

"Men are naturally reserved. They keep problems to themselves," he said.

"Because of finance, ego and how they were raised, they rarely share. Only a few people ever know what is happening at home."

He said cultural expectations that men must always lead the family and appear strong leave victims ashamed to speak up.

"When they finally do, people dismiss them: 'You are a man, why can you not handle it?'"

He stressed that while most picture domestic violence as physical, psychological abuse is far more common among male victims.

"Bruises are easy to see. What men hide is constant humiliation, coercion and emotional manipulation."

"When they try to report it, society's disbelief becomes a second wound."

The abuse often starts small, such as belittling or public humiliation that escalates when left unchecked.

He added that victims may first show subtle warning signs, such as reduced productivity, procrastination or burnout at work.

"When a person lacks authority at

home, he may release frustration where he has power, perhaps towards subordinates.

"That is how private pain becomes a workplace problem."

In rare but tragic cases, the pressure boils over.

"We have seen men who, after years of psychological abuse, finally explode."

"Some have even committed serious crimes. It is the burnout we fear most."

Zulfikar added that shifting family dynamics, with more Malaysian women in high-powered jobs, could create new fault lines.

"Some wives forget that home life requires partnership, not hierarchy."

"Workplace stress or ego clashes

could be taken out on the husband. At first, it may look like harmless venting, but it could become systematic abuse."

He said even housewives may lash out at their husbands if they feel isolated.

"Violence is not about gender, it is about control."

Men's reluctance to share emotions makes it worse.

"Women, when hurt, often seek support. Men just want someone to listen."

"But in busy offices, no one notices. Even the toughest guy could be suffering while appearing fine until he reaches a breaking point."

This emotional silence means that depression in men often goes undiagnosed.

Zulfikar urged parents, employers and society to act.

"Parents should let boys express feelings, the same way we encourage girls. Teach them early that crying or

talking is not weakness."

He recommended mental health support in workplaces, as well as confidential counselling and training managers to spot changes in behaviour.

"Some companies think staff wellbeing is only about performance. But if you care for employees as people, productivity follows."

His message is blunt – silence is dangerous.

"Violence has no gender. If you are a man experiencing abuse, speak up. Report it. The law does not discriminate and help is available."

"And to couples everywhere, if you want a loving partner, start by being one yourself. Do not manipulate or humiliate. When behaviour crosses the line, it is violence, no matter who commits it."

He said breaking the old belief that "boys do not cry" could save countless families from reaching a tragic boiling point.



Zulfikar said cultural expectations that men must always lead the family and appear strong leave victims ashamed to speak up.

— AMIRUL SYAFIQ
/THESUN

30,000 spousal abuse cases recorded since 2021

PETALING JAYA: More than 30,000 Malaysians have suffered domestic violence in the past five years, with men making up over a quarter of the victims, according to official data from the Women, Family and Community Development Ministry.

Its minister Datuk Seri Nancy Shukri revealed that between 2021 and June, police recorded 30,399 cases nationwide, involving 22,189 women and 8,210 men.

"The numbers clearly show that while women remain the majority of victims, men are also coming forward to report abuse.

"Domestic violence is not a private matter but a crime that has devastating consequences for individuals, families and society."

Over the same period, 4,610 cases were heard in court, resulting in 1,646 convictions.

She stressed that every report is investigated according to the law.

The Domestic Violence Act 1994 provides equal protection to male and female individuals. Every case is

taken seriously and those affected are supported via legal, counselling and protection mechanisms.

Nancy said while most crisis shelters cater to women and children, the ministry, through the Social Welfare Department, provides temporary safe spaces for men.

"Plans are underway to strengthen such facilities under the Eliminate Violence Against Women Intervention Centre initiative, which would expand services in partnership with NGOs and community groups."

She said stigma remains a major barrier for men.

"We must break the cultural barrier that discourages men from reporting abuse. No one should feel ashamed to seek help."

The ministry has rolled out advocacy and counselling programmes that highlight inclusivity while the Women's Development Department has introduced initiatives such as Program Matahari, Program IRIS and Skuad Waja, alongside psycho-education workshops.

The National Population and Family Development Board is also stepping up its role in men's health and family support through wellbeing clinics for men, fertility treatment and the SmartStart marriage preparation programme.

Other initiatives, such as Parenting@Work, IlmuKeluarga@LPPKN and SmartBelanja, aim to strengthen family resilience, financial literacy and emotional wellbeing.

"These are part of our broader strategy to support not just women, but men and families as a whole," said Nancy.

Launched in 2021, the Skuad Waja volunteer initiative has grown to more than 339,000 members nationwide, with over 22% of them being men.

Volunteers are trained as first responders to violence in their communities, offering immediate psychosocial support and referrals.

Nancy said while flagship campaigns, such as Aku Wanita@KRT and Ending Violence Against Women,

are still focused on women, her ministry is shifting to a more holistic approach.

"Our campaigns are inclusive. They are designed to highlight domestic violence as an issue that affects both genders, while also dismantling stigma and raising awareness of human rights and family wellbeing."

She reminded impacted individuals that help is available through Talian Kasih 15999, its WhatsApp channel at 019-261 5999, police stations, Social Welfare Department offices and 24-hour One Stop Crisis Centres in government hospitals.

"Domestic violence is not a private matter but a crime. No victim should suffer in silence. Every individual, whether man or woman, deserves to live free from fear and violence.

"The ministry is committed to working with communities, agencies and the public to foster a culture of respect, compassion and zero tolerance for abuse in Malaysia."

– **BY KIRTINEE RAMESH**

Cancer survivor recounts journey of grit

Initially stunned by diagnosis, mother of three forged ahead with treatment buffered by family support

KUALA LUMPUR: What began as a routine health check-up turned into a life-changing moment for Tengku Nazeedah Tengku Mahmood, who had always enjoyed good health with no underlying illnesses.

But to the 46-year-old homemaker's shock, she was diagnosed with colorectal cancer.

"My case was a little different because I had no symptoms at all. In April 2021, I underwent a colonoscopy and endoscopy, simply because I had entered my 40s. Honestly, I didn't even know what colorectal cancer was. When the doctor told me the news, I was completely stunned.

"I couldn't believe it, especially since I had no signs like changes in bowel habits, diarrhoea, constipation, changes in stool consistency, or unexplained weight loss," she told Bernama.

After the colonoscopy, doctors found a blockage in her rectum and took a biopsy. A CT scan the next day confirmed it was stage three colorectal cancer.

The mother of three said she struggled to process the diagnosis, especially since she had no family history of the disease.

"I remember looking at my husband... his face had gone pale and he was in shock. In our society, stage three or four cancer is often seen as a death sentence."

Refusing to give in, Tengku Nazeedah sought treatment at Universiti Malaya Medical Centre. After more than four years during which she has undergone surgery, chemotherapy and radiotherapy - she is now a cancer survivor.

"I only see my colorectal and oncology specialists once a year. I do a CT scan annually and a colonoscopy every three years," she said, adding that the unwavering support of her husband and children kept her strong.

Through her ordeal, she found purpose as a cancer awareness advocate. Today, she is active in the Colorectal Cancer Survivorship Society Malaysia and trained by the National Cancer Council Malaysia as a peer-support volunteer, regularly sharing her journey with patients.



In Malaysia, 4,000 to 4,500 new cases of colorectal cancer are recorded yearly, compared with 3,500 to 4,000 a decade ago. - SYED AZAHAR SYED OSMAN/THESUN

Colorectal cancer is the second most common cancer in Malaysia after breast cancer.

KPJ Tawakkal Specialist Hospital general surgeon and colorectal cancer specialist Dr Nurhashim Haron said it develops in the large intestine, specifically the colon and rectum.

"Cancer occurs when abnormal cells grow and multiply uncontrollably. Normally, cells in our body live for two to three weeks before dying and shedding naturally. The same applies to the intestinal lining. But when cells grow without dying, that's when cancer forms," he explained.

Cases are rising in Malaysia. Data from the National Cancer Registry showed colorectal cancer accounted for 18.8% of cancer cases among men between 2017 and 2021, compared with 14.8% during the 2012 to 2016 period. Among women, it made up 13.7% of cases, an

increase from 11.1% previously.

Nurhashim said colorectal cancer may show no symptoms in its early stages. However, bleeding is often the most common warning sign.

Other red flags include:

- changes in bowel habits (more frequent or less frequent defaecation);
- recurring abdominal pain;
- stool changes (constipation, hard pellet-like stools, stools with blood or mucus); and
- unexplained weight loss and decrease in appetite.

He added that individuals aged 45 and above are at higher risk, especially those with a family history of colorectal cancer.

"A decade ago, the higher-risk group was 50 and older. But now, even those in their mid-40s are getting this cancer," he said, adding Malaysia

records 4,000 to 4,500 new cases a year, compared with 3,500 to 4,000 a decade ago. Alarming, most are detected at stage three or four.

Nurhashim encouraged regular screening even before symptoms appear.

"Screening allows us to detect cancer early. Colorectal cancer often begins with small growths in the intestine called polyps. Each polyp has a 30% to 40% chance of developing into cancer. If we find and remove them early, we can prevent cancer altogether," he said.

The faecal occult blood (FOB) test, which detects hidden blood in stool samples, is a simple first step. If results are positive, further tests such as colonoscopy are required.

"Those aged above 45, or with a family history of cancer, should take the FOB test," he advised.

As for treatment, colorectal cancer usually involves surgery and chemotherapy.

Despite medical advances, colorectal cancer remains a sensitive subject in Malaysia as it involves bowel habits and stool.

"Many people feel embarrassed to talk about stool or rectal symptoms, so they delay seeking help. Some confuse colorectal cancer symptoms with haemorrhoids, which can cause bleeding and mucus but are not life-threatening. The danger is when people dismiss warning signs as haemorrhoids when it is actually cancer," Nurhashim cautioned.

He recounted the case of a 60-year-old patient who ignored bloody stools for almost a year, believing it was "just piles." By the time he sought help, he was pale, had low haemoglobin levels and was diagnosed with colorectal cancer.

"If the abdomen becomes bloated and the patient can no longer pass stool or gas, the intestine may rupture. Once this happens and stool leaks out, it can be fatal, requiring immediate surgery.

"Colorectal cancer can be prevented if detected and treated early. Patients then have a much better chance of recovery and survival," he said, while advising adults in the risk age group to maintain a healthy lifestyle, exercise regularly, avoid smoking and alcohol, and prevent obesity.

"Those with a family history of colorectal cancer, or anyone concerned about their risks, should see a doctor for screening. If you experience symptoms such as bloody or stools with mucus or changes in bowel habits, seek medical attention immediately."

Jawi santuni 50 pesakit dalam Cakna Madani Ziarah Hospital



SEMPENA Maulidur Rasul dan Hari Malaysia baru-baru ini, Bahagian Pengurusan Dakwah, Jabatan Agama Islam Wilayah Persekutuan (Jawi) menyantuni 50 pesakit termasuk bukan Islam di Hospital Tunku Azizah (HTA) dalam program Cakna Madani Ziarah Hospital.

Melalui program tersebut, para pesakit disantuni melalui penyampaian sumbangan barangan keperluan diri dan khidmat nasihat serta kata-kata semangat di samping bacaan doa.

Menurut Jawi, ia merupakan salah satu program dakwah *bil hal* (dengan akhlak) dan juga salah

satu usaha ke arah merealisasikan konsep Hospital Mesra Ibadah.

Inisiatif ini merupakan manifestasi kepada kerangka Malaysia Madani, sekali gus memperkukuh kerjasama antara institusi agama dan kesihatan dalam memelihara kebajikan rohani pesakit serta memupuk nilai empati dan kasih sayang dalam sistem penjagaan kesihatan.

Program diketuai Ketua Penolong Pengarah Kanan, Bahagian Pengurusan Dakwah Jawi, Imlah Abd Aziz dan turut dihadiri Timbalan Pengarah Pengurusan HTA, Rohaida Idayu Nawi.

IMLAH (tengah) bersama staf Hospital Tunku Azizah dan Bahagian Pengurusan Dakwah Jawi pada program Cakna Madani Ziarah Hospital baru-baru ini.