



PRESS STATEMENT
DIRECTOR GENERAL OF HEALTH MALAYSIA

26 September 2011

1. The Ministry of Health, Malaysia takes a very serious view of the recent press reports on the alleged involvement of Malaysian hospitals in kidney trade as reported in the following media:
 - a. The Sun - 22 Sept 2011 - "Malaysia among countries linked to kidney trade"
 - b. The Star - 21 September 2011 – "M'sia among countries in B'desh probe into illegal kidney trade"
 - c. Bernama - 21 September 2011 – "Malaysia among countries in Bangladesh Police probe into illegal kidney trade"
2. Malaysia being a member of the World Health Organization (WHO) and a signatory to The Declaration of Istanbul on Organ Trafficking and Transplant Tourism is committed to ensure that such illegal practices are not undertaken in this country.
3. In view of the serious allegation and the international repercussions associated with this report, the Ministry of Health Malaysia will liaise with the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Police to get to the bottom of this allegation.
4. I also want to reiterate our strong commitment to upholding the highest ethical and professional standards in organ donation and transplantation in this country. As part of a national initiative, the Ministry of Health Malaysia had officially launched the National Organ, Tissue and Cell Transplantation Policy in 2007 which was essentially aimed to guide the development of transplantation based on best ethical practices in all hospitals in the country. To further regulate transplantation in this country the Ministry of Health Malaysia is currently in the midst of drafting a new comprehensive Transplantation Bill.

5. Kidney transplantation in Malaysia is currently undertaken in very few specific hospitals namely Hospital Kuala Lumpur, Hospital Selayang, University Malaya Medical Centre and a few private hospitals within the Klang Valley. It seems a little far-fetched for such an illegal activity especially involving foreigners to have been undertaken in any of these hospitals. However if there is evidence that such a thing has happened in any of these hospitals then the Ministry of Health Malaysia will certainly take serious action against them.
6. Kidney transplantation is a definitive treatment for end stage renal failure (ESRF) and certainly improves the quality of life. However without a kidney transplant, the patient will have to undergo some form of renal replacement therapy which is available throughout the country. With regular dialysis and appropriate specialist care patients can maintain a reasonable standard of health and be able to lead a normal life.
7. In Malaysia there are currently more than 22,000 patients with ESRF receiving some form of renal replacement therapy and a significant number of them would certainly benefit from an improved quality of life with a kidney transplant.
8. The Ministry of Health Malaysia has been undertaking various efforts to promote cadaveric organ donation in the country but the supply of cadaveric organs is certainly inadequate to meet the demand. Hence many patients source organs from living donors. The Ministry of Health encourages cadaveric organ transplantation and transplants from live related donors. Transplants from unrelated donors will need to be vetted by an independent committee - "Unrelated Transplant Approval Committee" (UTAC) which is appointed by the Director General of Health. Hence the alleged transplants from unrelated foreigners (from Bangladesh) would have required prior approval from the Ministry of Health. From our records there have been no such requests / applications.

DATO' DR HASAN BIN ABDUL RAHMAN

Director General of Health Malaysia.