

AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO
MUKA SURAT : 5
RUANGAN : LOKAL

KES DENGGI MENINGKAT

Catat 317 kes baharu dengan empat kematian

Putrajaya: Sebanyak 317 kes baharu demam denggi dan empat kematian dilaporkan pada Minggu Epidemiologi ke-29 (ME29) iaitu bagi tempoh 14 hingga 20 Julai lalu.

Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Datuk Dr Muhammad Radzi Abu Hassan berkata, jumlah itu menunjukkan peningkatan dari 2,373 kes pada Minggu Epidemiologi ke-28 (ME28) kepada 2,690 kes pada ME29, dengan 69 kematian akibat komplikasi denggi.

Beliau berkata, bilangan lokaliti hotspot yang dilaporkan pada ME29 adalah sebanyak 94 lokaliti berbanding 100 pada minggu sebelumnya dengan 71 lokaliti di Selangor, enam di Perak, enam di Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur dan Putrajaya, masing-masing empat di Negeri Sembilan dan Kelantan, dua di Sabah serta satu di Kelantan.

"Bagi surveyan chikungunya, terdapat empat kes direkodkan pada ME29 dan jumlah kumulatif kes chikungunya sehingga kini adalah 58 kes.

"Bagi surveyan zika pula, sebanyak 1,505 sampel darah, lapan sampel urin dan tiga sampel cecair serebrospinal telah dijalankan saringan zika dan hasil kesemuanya adalah negatif," katanya dalam kenyataan, semalam.

Susulan itu, beliau menganjurkan semua pihak menjalankan aktiviti gotong-royong secara berkelala dan menjadikan *One Hour Malaysia Clean Up* sebagai aktiviti bulanan iaitu pada hari Sabtu minggu keempat setiap bulan bagi persekitaran yang lebih bersih dan bebas denggi.

- Bernama



DR Muhammad Radzi

AKHBAR : KOSMO
MUKA SURAT : 10
RUANGAN : NEGARA

Bukan senang nak beli buah pinggang

PENYAKIT buah pinggang kronik (CKD) kini menjadi satu perkara yang membimbangkan, malah jumlah pesakit semakin bertambah dengan satu dalam tujuh dewasa di Malaysia berhadapan masalah itu.

Pakar Perunding Nefrologi dan Pemindahan Buah Pinggang di Pusat Perubatan Sunway (SMC) Dr. Wong Hin Seng berkata, CKD adalah satu keadaan di mana fungsi ginjal tidak akan sembuh dan mungkin terus rosak sehingga tahap yang memerlukan dialisis atau transplant.

Menurutnya, strategi rawatan CKD adalah untuk memperlakukan kerosakan ginjal supaya tidak perlu menjalani dialisis.

"Tetapi meskipun semua strategi rawatan telah digunakan, ada keadaan buah pinggang pesakit masih terus rosak sehingga tahap akhir."

"Pada masa ini, dialisis adalah salah satu rawatan yang dapat membantu mengeluarkan bahan-bahan kumur daripada badan dengan menggunakan mesin," katanya.

Namun begitu, dialisis hanya dapat menggantikan fungsi ginjal antara 10 hingga 15 peratus.

Oleh itu, Dr. Hing Seng menegaskan, transplant buah pinggang adalah rawatan



Analisis
Semasa

Bersama
FARID AHMAD
TARMIJI

terbaik untuk kegagalan ginjal tahap akhir.

Terangnya, transplant buah pinggang amat disokong kerana secara teori ia akan menggantikan 50 peratus fungsi ginjal.

"Malah kualiti hidup pesakit yang menjalani transplant juga akan bertambah baik dan mereka boleh hidup normal.

"Sumber buah pinggang untuk transplant adalah melalui penderma organ orang yang masih hidup dan telah mati otak," jelasnya.

Oleh kerana buah pinggang amat berharga, ada yang menjual organ mereka.

Malah, baru-baru ini Kosmo! juga melaporkan ada individu sanggup menjual buah pinggang mereka kerana desakan hidup.

Namun begitu, proses untuk itu bukan mudah kerana saringan dan pemeriksaan yang komprehensif akan dilakukan terlebih dahulu bagi memastikan penderma kekal sihat dan dapat hidup normal.

Malah, Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) dalam satu hantaran di Facebook menyatakan bahawa segala bentuk eksploitasi pemindahan organ manusia adalah salah di sisi undang-undang.

Proses pemindahan organ hanya boleh dilaksanakan setelah menebat kriteria dan mendapat kebenaran bertulis daripada waris berdasarkan Akta Tisu Manusia 1974.

Dalam pada itu, Pengurus Klinikal Pendermaan Organ Kebangsaan Kanan, Pusat Sumber Transplant Nasional, Dr. Hasdy Haron berkata, proses pemindahan organ bukanlah semudah yang disangka.

"Pesakit perlu mendapatkan penderma sesuai sebelum dirujuk ke pakar untuk dibawa kepada pihak menguruskannya menerusi KKM.

"Banyak perkara diambil kira seperti perubatan, psikologi dan unsur mencurigakan bagi mengelakkan jual beli secara komersial antara pesakit dan penderma sebelum pemindahan dilakukan," ujarnya.

Tambah Dr. Hasdy, jual beli organ tidak dapat dinafikan kerana pesakit dan penderma boleh menipu selain mereka boleh melakukannya di luar negara untuk mengelak dikenakan tindakan.

AKHBAR : SINAR HARIAN
 MUKA SURAT : 16
 RUANGAN : CETUSAN

Risiko abai kesihatan mental kanak-kanak



ANALISIS
MUKA 16

AHMAD ISMADI ISMAIL

Kesihatan mental kanak-kanak dan remaja khususnya masalah kemurungan wajar diberi perhatian oleh ibu bapa dan masyarakat.

Ini kerana walaupun berkongsi simptom yang sama seperti golongan dewasa, kemurungan dalam kalangan kanak-kanak sering tidak disedari dan tidak dirawat.

Hakikatnya, kanak-kanak tidak terkecuali dalam menghadapi masalah emosi. Perubahan emosi dapat dilihat seperti sedih, takut, marah atau masalah tingkah laku.

Malangnya kemurungan boleh membawa kepada gangguan dalam proses tumbesaran serta pembelajaran mereka.

Masalah kesihatan mental dalam kalangan kanak-kanak dan remaja berusia lima hingga 15 tahun sudah meningkat kepada 16.5 peratus atau 922,318 kes tahun lalu daripada 7.9 peratus atau 424,000 kes pada 2019, kata Menteri Kesihatan, Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad baru-baru ini.

Statistik itu berdasarkan Tinjauan Kesihatan Morbiditi Kebangsaan oleh Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM).

Bagi menangani isu yang amat membimbangkan itu, Dr Dzulkefly berkata, pihaknya sudah melaksanakan Program Minda Sihat Sekolah iaitu kolaborasi antara KKM dan Kementerian Pendidikan (KPM) yang dilaksanakan di 2,456 sekolah menengah dan 7,776 sekolah rendah.

KKM juga menyediakan perkhidmatan kesihatan mental yang

boleh diakses di 1,088 klinik kesihatan, 63 hospital, dan 37 Pusat Kesihatan Mental Masyarakat (Mentar).

Turut dilaksanakan perkhidmatan kesihatan mental dan sokongan psikososial melalui penempatan 200 pegawai psikologi (kaunseling) di hospital daerah dan klinik kesihatan.

KKM juga berusaha meningkatkan bilangan pakar psikiatri kanak-kanak dan remaja kepada 30 orang menjelang 2027, berbanding 18 pakar yang ada di hospital KKM setakat ini.

Selain itu, faktor persekitaran keluarga memainkan peranan penting dalam pembentukan kesihatan mental kanak-kanak. Kesejahteraan emosi ibu bapa, komunikasi yang positif, dan kestabilan keluarga membolehkan mereka berasa selamat, dihargai, dan terlindungi dalam keluarga.

Ibu bapa harus mempunyai kesedaran tentang kesihatan mental kerana mereka memainkan peranan penting dalam membantu membangunkan kesejahteraan mental anak-anak. Ibu bapa juga perlu berbincang tentang perasaan anak mereka, bukannya hanya mengambil pendekatan menegur atau memarahi.

Selain itu, persekitaran sekolah juga mempunyai impak besar terhadap kesihatan mental. Sekolah yang memberi sokongan emosi, persekitaran yang positif dan menangani isu-isu seperti tekanan akademik dengan berkesan dapat membantu meningkatkan kesejahteraan mental golongan tersebut.

Sebelum ini, Ahli Majlis Penasihat Kesihatan Mental, Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye berkata, kanak-kanak wajar didedahkan dengan atas amalan kesihatan mental yang baik. Katanya, kemahiran seperti penyelesaian masalah dan pengurusan tekanan akan membantu meningkatkan ke-

“

Kemurungan memberi kesan kepada semua peringkat umur, walaupun berkongsi simptom yang sama seperti golongan dewasa, kemurungan pada kanak-kanak sering tidak disedari dan tidak dirawat.”

sihatan mental.

Lam Thye berkata, adalah penting untuk memastikan sekolah mempunyai kaunselor mencukupi sama ada di sekolah rendah dan menengah.

Guru juga katanya, harus dilengkapi dengan pengetahuan aras kesihatan mental seperti kebolehan mengenali pelajar yang mengalami masalah mental dan kemahiran memberi sokongan emosi.

Katanya, peranan rakan sekelas atau pembimbing rakan sebaya perlu ditubuh di setiap sekolah kerana sesetengah kanak-kanak berasa lebih selesa berbincang dengan rakan sebaya.

Program pendidikan kesihatan mental di sekolah dan komuniti juga membantu dalam meningkatkan kesedaran serta kemahiran untuk mengenal pasti masalah kesihatan mental pada peringkat awal.

Kesimpulannya, masalah kesihatan mental kanak-kanak dan remaja adalah isu serius. Sokongan yang berterusan daripada keluarga, masyarakat dan sekolah dapat membantu mengatasi isu tersebut, selain mendapatkan bantuan daripada pihak KKM.

*Ahmad Ismail Ismail ialah Wartawan Meja Jenayah/Mahkamah

AKHBAR : UTUSAN MALAYSIA
MUKA SURAT : 1
RUANGAN : MUKA HADAPAN

Cuaca panas bakal cetus krisis kesihatan

Oleh ARIF AIMAN ASROL
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PETALING JAYA: Malaysia diramal mengalami peningkatan suhu panas sepanjang tahun ini dan pada tahun-tahun akan datang sekiranya punca yang menyebabkan keadaan itu tidak ditangani segera.

Berdasarkan ramalan Jabatan Meteorologi Malaysia (MetMalaysia), negara bakal berdepan cuaca lebih panas dan kering hingga pertengahan September ini.

- Negara dijangka lebih panas, kering hingga September
- Boleh menyebabkan kematian manusia

Lebih membimbangkan, cuaca panas itu boleh menyebab-

kan negara dilanda dengan krisis kesihatan sehingga membawa kematian.

Ini kerana Pertubuhan Kesihatan Sedunia (WHO) menganggarkan sekitar 12.6 juta kematian atau 23 peratus daripada semua kematian global boleh dikaitkan dengan faktor risiko persekitaran seperti pemanasan global, pencemaran udara, sanitasi yang buruk, perubahan iklim, racun perosak dan penyakit bawaan vektor.

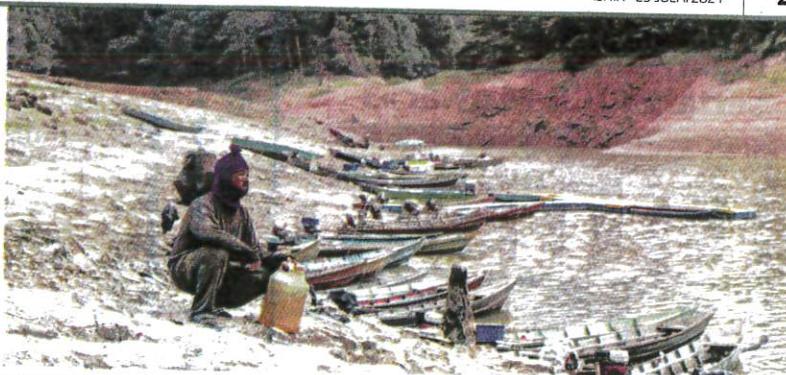
Kematian tersebut termasuk

kesan langsung dan tidak langsung kesan pemanasan global yang mempengaruhi kesihatan manusia melalui pelbagai cara termasuk peningkatan suhu, kualiti udara yang buruk, dan perubahan dalam corak penyakit.

Lebih memburukkan apabila WHO menganggarkan daripada jumlah tersebut, 7.3 juta atau 58 peratus kematian itu berlaku di Asia Tenggara dan wilayah Pasifik Barat.

Bersambung di muka 2

AKHBAR : UTUSAN MALAYSIA
MUKA SURAT : 2
RUANGAN : DALAM NEGERI



Utusan Malaysia
ISNIN • 29 JULAI 2024

2

TASIK Gubir yang menempatkan Empangan Muda adalah antara kawasan takungan air utama di negara ini yang mengalami penyusutan air yang drastik akibat cuaca panas dan ketiadaan hujan sejak lebih sebulan lalu. - UTUSAN / SHAHIR NOORDIN

Cuaca panas bakal cetus krisis kesihatan

Dari muka 1

Pakar Kesihatan Persekutuan di Jabatan Kesihatan Persekutuan dan Pekerjaan, Fakulti Perubatan dan Sains Kesihatan, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Profesor Dr. Juliana Jalaludin berkata, keadaan tersebut berlaku disebabkan salah laku manusia sendiri.

Menurut beliau, para saintis iklim sudah menunjukkan bahawa manusia bertanggungjawab terhadap hampir semua pemanasan global sejak 200 tahun lalu.

Jelasnya, aktiviti dilakukan manusia menyebabkan gas rumah hijau memanaskan dunia lebih cepat pada bila-bila masa dalam sekurang-kurangnya 2,000 tahun lalu.

Berdasarkan Laporan Keadaan Iklim Asia 2023 yang dikeluarkan oleh Pertubuhan Meteorologi Dunia Pertubuhan Bangsa-Bangsa Bersatu, pada Mei lalu ada menyebut Asia memanas dengan lebih pantas berbanding purata peningkatan suhu secara global.

"Trend peningkatan di Asia sejak 1991 hingga 2023 hampir mencecah dua kali ganda berbanding trend peningkatan antara 1961 dan 1990 dan ia jauh

lebih besar dibandingkan 30 tahun sebelumnya," katanya ketika dihubungi *Utusan Malaysia*.

Terdahulu, akhbar ini melapor, suhu di Malaysia ketika ini direkodkan semakin panas dengan peningkatan sebanyak 1.35 darjah Celsius dalam tempoh 50 tahun.

Berdasarkan laporan *Fourth National Communication (NC4)* pada 2 Mei lalu, berlaku peningkatan suhu maksimum sebanyak 0.24 darjah Celsius setiap dekad manakala suhu minimum permukaan bagi Semenanjung mencatatkan pertambahan 0.27 darjah Celsius sejak 50 tahun lepas.

Perbandingan ini membuktikan suhu minimum meningkat pada kadar lebih cepat berbanding suhu maksimum, sekali gus menjadikan malam lebih panas dengan cepat berbanding siang.

Mengulas lanjut, Juliana berkata, kesan kesihatan persekitaran tidak lagi boleh dianggap sebagai keimbangan kecil kerana tanpa perubahan paradigma akan menyebabkan kesihatan manusia terjejas dengan teruk selain mengancam kelestarian planet.

"Negara perlu mengambil langkah-langkah untuk mengurangkan kesan ini seperti meningkatkan kawasan hijau, mem-

promosikan pengangkutan awam dan menggunakan sumber tenaga boleh diperbaharu agar dapat membantu mengurangkan suhu yang semakin meningkat di Malaysia.

"Melalui langkah-langkah persediaan dan mitigasi, Malaysia perlu terus melaksanakan strategi untuk mengurangkan emisi pencemar udara dan gas rumah hijau, meningkatkan kecekapan tenaga dan melaksanakan amalan pengurusan tanah yang lestari," katanya.

Tambahnya, perubahan iklim menimbulkan cabaran kesihatan, ekonomi dan sosial yang ketara kepada populasi di negara ini maka memerlukan strategi menyeluruh.

"Ini merangkumi pengurusan sistem penjagaan kesihatan, meningkatkan kesiapsiagaan bencana dan membina rangkaian sokongan komuniti yang berdaya tahan.

"Dengan memberi tumpuan kepada kerentanan unik golongan sensitif seperti bayi, kanak-kanak, warga emas dan golongan berisiko tinggi dengan komorbiditi."

"Negara amat perlu meningkatkan ketahanan dan kesejahteraan populasi dalam menghadapi perubahan iklim," tegasnya.

AKHBAR : UTUSAN MALAYSIA
MUKA SURAT : 14
RUANGAN : DALAM NEGERI

14 | Utusan Malaysia
ISNIN • 29 JULAI 2024

Denggi: 69 maut, kes naik berbanding tahun lalu

Oleh FITRI NIZAM
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PETALING JAYA: Jumlah kematian akibat demam denggi se-takat Julai tahun ini meningkat kepada 69 orang berbanding 47 orang yang direkodkan pada tahun sebelumnya.

Berdasarkan laporan Minggu Epidemiologi Ke-29 dikeluarkan Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM), jumlah kumulatif kes demam denggi yang dilaporkan juga meningkat mendadak iaitu sebanyak 83,131 kes berbanding 66,224 kes pada tahun lalu.

Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Datuk Dr. Muhammad Radzi Abu Hassan berkata, bilangan lokaliti titik panas (*hotspot*) yang dilaporkan adalah sebanyak 94 lokaliti berbanding 100 pada minggu sebelumnya.

"Daripada 94 lokaliti yang dilaporkan, 71 daripadanya di Selangor, Kuala Lumpur - Putrajaya (enam), Perak (enam), Negeri Sembilan (empat), Kedah (empat), Sabah (dua) dan Kelantan (satu)," katanya dalam satu kenyataan dikeluarkan semalam.

Menurut Dr. Muhammad Radzi, bagi surveyan chikungunya, terdapat empat kes direkodkan pada Minggu Epidemi-



PENCEGAHAN demam denggi memerlukan tindakan bersama termasuk menyembur asap pembasmi nyamuk Aedes. - UTUSAN/
SHAIKH AHMAD RAZIF

ologi Ke-29.

Beliau berkata, jumlah kumulatif kes chikungunya sehingga kini adalah 58 kes.

"Bagi surveyan zika, sebanyak 1,505 sampel darah, lapan urin dan tiga sampel serebrospinal dijalankan saringan dan hasil kesemuanya adalah negatif," katanya.

Mengulas lanjut, beliau berkata, pencegahan demam denggi memerlukan tindakan bersama termasuk menjalankan

gotong-royong secara berkala.

"Semua rakyat Malaysia, sama ada dari agensi kerajaan, swasta, komuniti atau badan bukan kerajaan (NGO) disarankan untuk bersama-sama menjadikan 'One Hour Malaysia Clean Up' sebagai aktiviti bulanan.

"Mekanisme pelaksanaannya adalah pada setiap hari Sabtu minggu keempat setiap bulan dan dilaksanakan sekurang-kurangnya sejam bagi satu sesi," katanya.

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 3
RUANGAN : NATION

Orang Asli teen inspires doctor to launch cervical cancer vax drive

By RSN MURALI
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KUALA LIPIS: A specialist doctor from a public hospital here is ramping up an awareness campaign on the prevention of cervical cancer, thanks to a teenage Orang Asli girl.

Obstetrician and Gynaecologist Dr D. Devendran said he met the 14-year-old while she was accompanying her elder sister to the hospital last month.

"She showed a video from a social media post of teenagers getting the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccinations in other states.

"She then asked whether teenagers in her village could get the same life-saving jabs, which touched the hearts of my team and I," he said in an interview yesterday.

Dr Devendran said the request showed that the Orang Asli's younger generation were aware of the importance of getting the HPV vaccination.

He said the teenager, a school dropout, had made him realise that it was important to organise outreach programmes in Orang Asli settlements in the district.

"This was when my team decided to moot the initiative to reach out to the Orang Asli community through cooperation with non-governmental organisations (NGOs)," he said.

Dr Devendran said for a start, an outreach programme would be held at the Kampung Orang Asli Sungai Yong, Ulu Dong, in Raub.

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 6
RUANGAN : NATION

6 Nation

THE STAR, MONDAY 29 JULY 2024

Salaries and benefits the next steps

After moratorium is lifted, nurse groups want more solutions to address shortage

By ALLISON LAI
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PETALING JAYA: Lifting the moratorium on new diploma-level nursing courses is just one part of the solution towards addressing the estimated 62% shortage of registered professionals by 2030, say nurses' groups.

They say while it is a positive step, better salaries and continuing to allow foreign nurses, among others, are needed to replace those leaving the service.

Malayan Nurses Union president Saaidah Athman said lifting the moratorium is a way to increase the number of future nurses, adding that Health Ministry colleges would also be accepting more trainees to address the shortage.

"Previously, many private nursing colleges were forced to close due to the Covid-19 pandemic and strict requirements. There has also been a decline in interest

among young people for nursing," she said in an interview yesterday.

The shortage of nurses, said Saaidah, is an ongoing issue, with an estimated 4% to 5% leaving the profession each year due to migration, retirement or resignation.

"The starting salary for nurses in the civil service is around RM1,800 per month, excluding allowances based on the existing government scheme. This should be increased to RM2,000 with new allowances created for shifts and meals, as practised in other countries," she said.

Malaysian healthcare workers, including nurses, said Saaidah, are migrating for higher salaries and better opportunities abroad.

"This has created nursing vacancies, forcing government hospital nurses to work overtime and leading to burnout and early retirement," she said.

Deputy Higher Education Minister Datuk Mustapha Sakmud

had told the Dewan Negara on July 23 that the moratorium on new diploma-level nursing courses at private higher education institutions, which had been in effect since 2010, would end on Aug 1.

He said the Cabinet had made the decision to lift the moratorium on July 5 after discussions between the Higher Education Ministry and the Health Ministry on the shortage of registered nurses in the country.

Association of Private Hospitals of Malaysia's nursing chapter chairman Sally Tan said lifting the moratorium is only a short-term measure and would not immediately resolve the nursing shortage.

"We call on the Nursing Board to allow private hospitals to recruit experienced foreign nurses without post-basic qualifications until 2027 – before new batches of nurses are trained," she said.

Retaining nurses, said Tan, is a challenge as Malaysia cannot

compete with the salaries offered abroad.

"The new generation of nurses seeks better work-life balance, which can be addressed through flexible working hours once there is a sufficient pool.

"Improving career advancement, working environment and mental wellness support are also important steps. The 20% allocation of specialised nursing courses should also be increased for private hospitals," she said.

More concrete, strategic and long-term solutions are needed, such as public-private partnerships to share resources, create awareness to encourage young people to pursue nursing and improve collaboration between academic institutions and clinical settings, added Tan.

Mahsa University's founder and former dean of nursing and midwifery Prof Zahrah Saad said the nurses' groups had been waiting for the government to revise

their salaries.

"Nurses have always been the backbone of the healthcare system, covering about 50% of the workforce. We hope the new incentives and allowances will be better than before," she said, adding that the Health Ministry's primary and immediate step should be on retaining existing nurses in the public service.

"We propose revising nurses' salaries and benefits, benchmarking post-basic allowances and creating a positive work environment with work-life balance.

"Nurses should also be relocated based on expertise and not just as 'emergency replacements,'" she said.

She added that nurse trainee selection criteria should also be reviewed, especially in the private sector, to address overworking.

"Reinstate ward or counter administrative staff to allow nurses to focus on core duties," she suggested.

But those working overseas, such as in the Middle East, are given up to 36 days leave per year, she added.

R. Letchmi Devi, a retired nurse of 30 years who now lectures at a private medical college, said higher salaries are the main factor that push Malaysian nurses to leave for overseas stints.

Compared to the basic salary of RM2,000 here, she said they can make more than RM10,000 in Singapore and the Middle East.

"Malaysian nurses are in demand overseas and are the preferred choice compared to those from other countries. Nurses specialising in midwifery can earn much more," she said.

Sapiah Abdul Hadi, a nurse of 41 years who has served in senior positions in both the government and private sector, said it is imperative to provide the current generation of nurses a conducive work environment to retain them in the service as job satisfaction is another important factor apart from financial gain.

"Upgrading of skills and continuous learning are essential for nurses to keep up with changes in the profession.

"However, due to the shortage of nurses, they need to wait for their turn to upgrade their skills," said Sapiah.

Poly-Tech Mara College dean of Bio-Industry and Health Science Hasmawati Yahya said demand for nurses is rising.

"If we cannot compete with the salary offered overseas, then at least we should offer other benefits such as opportunities to improve their skills and better medical perks," she said.

Better pay main draw for M'sian nurses leaving to work abroad

By CHARLES RAMENDRAN
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PETALING JAYA: A lack of remuneration for Malaysian nurses is one of the reasons why they leave to work in other countries where the pay is better, says a nursing department leader.

Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) M. Kandiah Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences nursing department head Liew Siew Fun said nurses are highly regarded in developed countries and given recognition for their role in healthcare.

She said it is also crucial for hospitals to provide a career pathway for our nurses to allow them to upgrade their skills.

"It's unwise to increase the number of nurses to overcome the shortage without any emphasis

on competency," she said in an interview.

On the recruitment of foreign nurses to compensate the shortage, Liew said such a move will not resolve the issue totally.

"Foreign nurses may not be familiar with local healthcare practices while the language barrier is another problem. This could create a dangerous situation for our patients."

"The funds we spend on recruiting foreign nurses can be invested on upgrading the skills of our nurses. We should be focusing on quality and not churn out nurses to fulfil quantity," she added.

Liew said Singapore has enticed nurses with not just better salaries but also other attractive benefits which have led to about 70% of Malaysian nurses crossing the border to work there.

"Not everyone wants to be away from their family. We need to find out why our nurses are leaving for Singapore," she said.

Her colleague, Asst Prof Dr Thavamalar Paramasivam, said the decision for nurses to seek opportunities overseas is not just about financial gain, but also about finding an environment where their professional skills and human compassion are acknowledged and valued.

She claimed that local nurses are overworked and undergo constant physical and mental stress due to the long hours they serve to make up for the shortage of manpower.

She also said annual leave benefits for nurses in the private sector are also inadequate as they are only given between 14 and 16 days leave on average.

But those working overseas, such as in the Middle East, are given up to 36 days leave per year, she added.

R. Letchmi Devi, a retired nurse of 30 years who now lectures at a private medical college, said higher salaries are the main factor that push Malaysian nurses to leave for overseas stints.

Compared to the basic salary of RM2,000 here, she said they can make more than RM10,000 in Singapore and the Middle East.

"Malaysian nurses are in demand overseas and are the preferred choice compared to those from other countries. Nurses specialising in midwifery can earn much more," she said.

Sapiah Abdul Hadi, a nurse of 41 years who has served in senior positions in both the government and private sector, said it is imperative to provide the current generation of nurses a conducive work environment to retain them in the service as job satisfaction is another important factor apart from financial gain.

"Upgrading of skills and continuous learning are essential for nurses to keep up with changes in the profession.

"However, due to the shortage of nurses, they need to wait for their turn to upgrade their skills," said Sapiah.

Poly-Tech Mara College dean of Bio-Industry and Health Science Hasmawati Yahya said demand for nurses is rising.

"If we cannot compete with the salary offered overseas, then at least we should offer other benefits such as opportunities to improve their skills and better medical perks," she said.

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Initiatives to improve dental health in Sabah

KOTA KINABALU: As many as 94.1% of the adult population in Sabah suffer from cavities or caries, said state health director Dr Asits Sanna.

He said the findings from the National Oral Health Survey showed that 82% of six-year-olds and 63.3% of 12-year-old pupils also have caries problems.

This showed that dental health issues are more prevalent in rural areas due to high sugar intake and lack of emphasis on preventive dental care.

"The Sabah Health Department is committed to improving oral health across the state. We are promoting preventive practices as daily routines, such as brushing teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste," he said in his speech at the Dental Health Promotion Week held here on Saturday.

Asits said to enhance access to health facilities, the department has expanded its services through a network of dental clinics and specialist facilities.

This year, under the 12th Malaysia Plan's Fourth Rolling Plan, the department has received approval for the acquisition of three new mobile dental clinics to serve the districts of Penampang, Keningau, and Kudat.

He added that approval has also been granted for the establishment of four mobile dental teams to support the Kepayan Dental Clinic, Luyang Dental Clinic, Telupid Dental Clinic, and Tawau Dental Clinic. — Bernama