

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 18
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Ahli Parlimen dedah terima maklumat kes buli di hospital

Kuala Lumpur: Ahli Parlimen Kuala Langat, Datuk Dr Ahmad Yunus Hairi, mendedahkan beliau menerima maklumat mengenai beberapa kes buli di sebuah hospital Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) di Semenanjung, sehingga ada mangsa mempunyai idea untuk membunuh diri.

Dr Ahmad Yunus berkata, maklumat berkenaan diterima susulan isu buli dalam kalangan petugas kesihatan di fasiliti KKM yang dibangkitkan beliau ketika Waktu Pertanyaan-Pertanyaan Menteri di Dewan Rakyat, sebelum ini.

Beliau berkata, satu kes berkenaan membabitkan seorang ahli biologi di Jabatan Patologi hospital berkenaan.

"Saya dapat maklumat beberapa lagi membabitkan isu buli, membabitkan pakar mikrobiologi yang mempunyai idea untuk membunuh diri dan mendapat rawatan psikiatrik.




"Ada laporan polis dibuat dan kepada pejabat Perdana Menteri serta pejabat Menteri KKM seawal Julai 2023.

"Apa tindakan yang diambil dan bagaimana ia diuruskan? Saya harap Jawatankuasa Bebas yang ditubuhkan untuk isu buli ini membuat siasatan secara menyeluruh," katanya ketika membahaskan Rang Undang-Undang (RUU) Perbekalan 2025 di Dewan Rakyat, semalam.

Pada masa sama, beliau turut bertanya sama ada skim emolumenten dan elaun sektor kesihatan dikaji bagi membendung penghirahan tenaga kerja kesihatan keluar, termasuk perincian elaun *on call* yang dikatakan dinaikkan RM55 hingga RM65.

"Saya juga ada fail permohonan daripada jururawat, yang saya kira mohon dikaji emolumenten, gaji dan elaun mereka kerana sebahagiannya sudah memiliki ijazah," katanya.

AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO
MUKA SURAT : 23
RUANGAN : BISNES

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bisnes

Percepat transformasi digital sektor kesihatan

Kuala Lumpur: Maxis, syarikat telekomunikasi bersepadu terkemuka Malaysia dan Kumpulan AmBank memperdalam kerjasama berterusan mereka melalui memorandum persefahaman (MoU) bagi mempercepat transformasi digital dalam sektor penjagaan kesihatan Malaysia.

Kedua-dua pihak akan memacu penggunaan penyelesaian termaju yang dikuasakan oleh ketersambungan merentasi ekosistem penjagaan kesihatan, dengan menggabungkan keupayaan digital Maxis yang luas dengan penyelesaian kewangan komprehensif AmBank.

Ketua Pegawai Eksekutif Maxis, Goh Senow Eng berkata, bersama dengan AmBank, pihaknya berharap dapat mempercepatkan penerimgunaan digital dalam sektor penjagaan kesihatan Malaysia, bagi memberi manfaat kepada penyedia kesihatan serta

pesakit yang mereka layani.

"Langkah ini adalah perluasan kepada inisiatif berterusan kami untuk mempromosikan penyelesaian digital masa hadapan untuk perniagaan yang dikuasakan oleh ketersambungan 5G dan 5G-Advanced, termasuk teknologi Internet Kebendaan (IoT).

"Melalui kerjasama ini, kami akan dapat memanfaatkan teknologi terbaik untuk memajukan agenda Penjagaan Kesihatan Pintar (*Smart Healthcare*) untuk negara, sejajar dengan matlamat kami untuk menghubungkan orang ramai dan perniagaan kepada dunia yang penuh kemungkinan," katanya.

Sementara itu, Ketua Pegawai Eksekutif Kumpulan AmBank, Jamie Ling berkata, kerjasama dengan Maxis diteruskan lagi dengan kolaborasi dalam sektor penjagaan kesihatan.



GOH (dua dari kiri) bersama Ling (dua dari kanan) pada majlis pengumuman MoU di Kuala Lumpur.

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 6
RUANGAN : NATION

Time to review Act to prevent misuse of mental illness diagnoses in courts

By RAHIMY RAHIM
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PETALING JAYA: The Mental Health Act 2001 should be reviewed to protect the public against the misuse of mental illness diagnoses in the legal system and at the same time provide justice to victims, say experts.

Psychiatry expert Dr Hazli Zakaria said with the prevalence of mental health problems and mental illness since the Covid-19 pandemic, it is timely to review the Act.

"This is the right time to review, not only to protect the public from those who 'misuse' the diagnosis of mental illness but for Malaysians to have their right to live safely and be protected," he said when contacted yesterday.

On Oct 26, the Health Ministry announced its preparedness to examine all factors, including potential legislative amendments, in response to concerns regarding the use of mental health as a defence in criminal cases.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said it is still too early to make a decision as the matter requires thorough scrutiny.

He was responding to the growing public concern that crimes committed by individuals, supposedly with mental health issues, could result in inadequate justice for victims and their families as offenders might be deemed mentally unfit for prosecution.

Dr Hazli also highlighted the importance of having early access to basic mental health treatment and interventions, as well as to find the right mechanism to ensure those who are truly in



Stressful: A model posing as a patient at a ward in Hospital UMRA in Shah Alam. Reviewing the Mental Health Act will not only protect the public from those who 'misuse' the diagnosis of mental illness but for Malaysians to have their right to live safely and be protected, says Dr Hazli Zakaria.

need would be able to receive it.

He urged all relevant parties to discuss the matter to ensure best practices and in line with international standards.

Shanti Abraham, a legal practitioner, has called for the existing laws to be updated.

"The Mental Health Act needs revision and a (separate) Mental Capacity Act needs to be introduced in Malaysia together with a Vulnerable Adults Act.

"But more than that, clear policies need to be drawn up, and an early and effective dispute resolution system needs to be formulated.

"Access to mental health professionals and counselling must also improve to allow early diagnosis and treatment," she added.

Selangor Mental Health Association president Datuk Dr Andrew Mohanraj said there is a misconception that being diag-



nosed with a mental illness would be considered a mitigating factor by the criminal justice system.

"This is not true, rather it is important to establish if a person was of sound mind at the time of committing a crime.

"This explores the intent of the person, the understanding of the nature of their action and the consequences of their action.

"Even if a person has been diagnosed with a mental illness, it does not mean the person was of unsound mind when the act was committed," he said.

Dr Andrew said for further determination, the court could direct the individual to have a psychiatric evaluation, which is usually done by a forensic psychiatrist.

"Based on the report, the court can then decide on the culpability of the accused.

"I would caution individuals or their families about making frivolous claims of having a mental illness with the hope that it can lower the level of culpability or absolve the individual.

"A thorough psychiatric evaluation can detect such claims.

"At the same time, it is important to ensure that the individual receives appropriate mental health support and treatment during court proceedings, as well as during incarceration irrespective of the element of soundness of mind with relevance to the case," Dr Andrew said.

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 6
RUANGAN : VIEWS

16 Views



YOUR OPINION

THE STAR, TUESDAY 29 OCTOBER 2024
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A pseudonym may be included.

When you take many medicines

POLYPHARMACY, the concurrent use of multiple medications, is a growing global public health concern. According to a 2023 article in *The Lancet*, polypharmacy increases the economic burden on healthcare systems by driving up drug costs and expenses associated with managing medication-related harm.

Polypharmacy generally refers to the use of at least five medications, including prescription drugs, over-the-counter medicines, and traditional or complementary remedies. While appropriate polypharmacy can be beneficial by achieving specific therapeutic objectives, inappropriate polypharmacy, where unnecessary medications are prescribed, raises the risk of adverse effects.

A 2020 study in *Nature Scientific Reports* found that polypharmacy is especially prevalent among the elderly, with approximately 46.6% of older adults experiencing it. This practice is associated with significantly higher risks of hospitalisation and mortality. The prevalence of polypharmacy is expected to increase, posing a significant health challenge for patients with multimorbidity, or two or more long-term conditions.

Factors like comorbidities, clin-



Photo: SHVETSA/Pexels

ical conditions, allergies, and potential drug interactions should be carefully considered when prescribing medications. Vulnerable patient groups, particularly those over 65 years of age, frail individuals, and those dependent on others for daily activities, are especially susceptible to adverse drug reactions, medication adherence issues, and drug-drug interactions.

Polypharmacy can also significantly affect oral health. Side effects such as dry mouth, gingival overgrowth, altered taste, increased risk of fungal infections, and a burning sensation in the mouth are common among patients taking multiple medica-

Medications like antihistamines, antidepressants, anticholinergics, muscle relaxants, and diuretics often reduce saliva production, leading to dry mouth. Since saliva is crucial for moistening the oral cavity and maintaining a balanced oral environment, reduced saliva can increase the risk of tooth decay, gum disease and oral infections.

Certain drugs, such as anti-convulsants (e.g. phenytoin) and calcium channel blockers, can cause gum enlargement (gingival hyperplasia), which complicates oral hygiene and raises the risk of periodontal disease. Additionally, some medications may alter taste perception, impacting appetite and nutrition, which can

further affect overall health.

The risk of oral infections in patients with polypharmacy can also increase due to immunosuppressive medications or conditions like dry mouth. Immunotherapy and cancer treatments, for instance, may weaken the immune system and heighten susceptibility to infections.

The most common oral infection among those on polypharmacy is candidal infection, often presenting as removable white patches (thrush) in the mouth.

Effectively addressing polypharmacy requires a multi-disciplinary approach. Raising awareness among patients is crucial, empowering them to play a central role in preventing and recognising inappropriate medication use.

Healthcare professionals, including physicians and pharmacists, should conduct regular medication reviews for patients at high risk of polypharmacy – such as those taking five or more medications, those with multiple comorbidities, and nursing home residents who are often elderly and frail.

Dentists should also play an active role by encouraging regular dental check-ups, especially for patients on multiple medica-

tions. Oral health education should emphasise managing the effects of polypharmacy, with recommendations like maintaining effective oral hygiene, using saliva substitutes, and making dietary adjustments such as sipping water frequently to stay hydrated.

We urge patients, caregivers, and healthcare providers to take proactive steps.

Patients and their families should keep a detailed list of all medications, including over-the-counter and herbal products, and discuss them with their healthcare team during every visit.

Regularly consult with your dentist, especially if you are taking multiple medications, to address any oral health issues early. By staying informed, asking questions and scheduling regular check-ups, we can all work together to ensure safer medication use and improve overall health outcomes.

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AKHBAR : THE SUN
MUKA SURAT : 3
RUANGAN : NATIONAL

No evidence of bullying in death of doctor

GEORGE TOWN: The Health Ministry has found no evidence of overwork or bullying in the death of a doctor at the Seberang Jaya Hospital earlier this year.

Deputy Health Minister Datuk Lukanisman Awang Sauni said initial investigations revealed that 30 other medical staff were on duty when the doctor was working, exceeding the usual maximum of 25 doctors at any one time.

"We are probing the matter further. We are not only examining (bullying) in Penang but also on a national level."

On Oct 17, Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said the ministry was investigating the doctor's death in June, believed to be linked to bullying and excessive workload.

Lukanisman said the ministry is addressing cases of bullying involving health personnel and would not compromise on any incidents of bullying at ministry facilities nationwide.

He said this includes the death of a pathology specialist at a hospital in Lahad Datu on Aug 29. - Bernama

Ministry conducts education on smoking Act

GEORGE TOWN: The Health Ministry inspected 45,665 premises nationwide between Oct 1 and Sunday to provide education on the Smoking Products Control Act for Public Health 2023 (Act 852).

Its deputy minister Datuk Lukanisman Awang Sauni said the inspections were conducted through 2,697 operations, with 57,856 "educational enforcement" actions taken.

"A total of 827 notices were issued for smoking in prohibited areas, 16 to minors for smoking and six to business premises that failed to display no-smoking signs as required."

A total of 46 food premises

around the Medan Renong Food Complex and Lebu Light were inspected, with 34 receiving the "Clean and Safe" recognition.

He said the ministry hopes business owners would comply with the set guidelines and they have sufficient time before the government enforces the ban on displaying tobacco products in April next year.

He also said the ministry is conducting educational enforcement for the public and business owners.

"We will conduct comprehensive engagement sessions so that business owners are ready to comply with the regulations regarding the ban on displaying tobacco products."

Act 852 came into force on Oct 1 and includes provisions on the sale of tobacco products in the form of games and regulations regarding the advertising, promotion and sponsorship of tobacco products.

This is in addition to the prohibition of tobacco sales in places such as educational institutions, markets, online platforms and via vending machines. - Bernama



Lukanisman said the ministry is conducting educational enforcement for the public and business owners to prepare them for compliance with the new regulations.
- ADIB RAWI
YAHYATHESUN

AKHBAR : THE SUN
MUKA SURAT : 11
RUANGAN : SPEAK UP

LETTERS letters@thesundaily.com

Tackle rising threat of vaping among youths

VAPING is drawing a new generation of young people into nicotine addiction, putting millions of children at risk and threatening to reverse years of progress in reducing youth tobacco use.

This emerging crisis of youth addiction is driven by aggressive marketing and thousands of kid-friendly flavours that mask large doses of nicotine.

Research indicates that young people are not merely experimenting with vaping as many are using these products daily, a clear sign of growing addiction.

Flavoured products are at the core of this trend, with 90% of youth vape users choosing flavours such as fruit, candy, dessert, mint and menthol.

These flavours mask the natural bitterness of nicotine, which is highly addictive and can harm the developing adolescent brain, affecting areas responsible for attention, learning, mood and impulse control.

Additionally, vapes contain over 30 harmful chemicals and heavy metals linked to lung disease.

Despite the term 'vapour', vapes do not produce water vapour. Instead, they release an aerosol mist containing ultra-fine particles that are inhaled into the lungs.

These particles can damage delicate lung tissue, making it more susceptible to respiratory illnesses.

Paediatrician Dr Deepa Camenga, who primarily treats teenagers, recently received a call from the mother of a 12-year-old who told her he didn't know how to stop vaping.

She noted that the level of addiction she observes in these young people is akin to that of adults who have smoked for decades.

This is deeply concerning for their future health and well-being, as these young people represent the future leaders of our country, our most valuable natural resource.

This raises critical questions: What is the government doing to regulate the vape industry, and how can parents, healthcare professionals, teachers and school organisations respond?

Parliament recently enacted the Control of Smoking Products for Public Health Act, which came into force on Oct 1.

Under this law, it is illegal to sell, purchase or display for sale any tobacco-related products, including vapes, to individuals under 18 years old.

Violators face steep fines, imprisonment or both.

This legislation was introduced in response to the rise in vaping among underage users.

According to the National Health and Morbidity Survey, the vaping rate among adolescents aged 13 to 17 has risen from 9.8% in 2017 to 14.9% in 2022.

Coupled with other new restrictions, Malaysia's vaping industry - valued at RM3.5 billion - could see a 40% drop in market size due to these regulations.

Malaysia is only the second nation in the Asia-Pacific region to implement preventive legislation against smoking for future generations.

Parents and family members are the first line of defence in promoting healthy habits among young people.

Healthcare professionals advise parents to discuss the harmful effects of vaping on the developing body and brain.

Parents can also set a positive example by not smoking or vaping themselves, creating a tobacco-free home environment and actively listening to their children's concerns.

Encouraging healthy coping strategies for managing stress and peer pressure is essential, as is staying informed about the latest developments in vaping.

Parents should get to know their children's friends and their families, collaborating to create engaging and healthy recreational activities.

Encourage young people to join well-supervised, school-sponsored activities, such as sports teams, music groups, community service organisations, drama clubs and debate teams.

Above all, parents should monitor their children's behaviour closely.

No one understands or cares for them more than their parents.

Schools, teachers, and parent-teacher organisations can play a crucial role in addressing this issue as it arises.

Early intervention is essential. All school staff should be familiar with the school's vaping policy and trained to handle student concerns about vaping.

School counsellors and nurses should be a primary source of support for students and parents alike.

Schools can also support parents by hosting educational sessions and discussion groups, and inviting community experts to provide talks and resources.

Together, parents and schools are powerful allies in keeping young people safe and tackling the issue of vaping.

As vaping's harmful effects become widely recognised, stakeholders - particularly parents and teachers - must play an active role in monitoring young people's social circles and tracking their activities.

Through stronger education, stricter regulations, and consistent enforcement, we can limit youth access to vaping products and help safeguard their health.

C. Sathasivam Sitheravellu
Seremban