

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES

MUKA SURAT : 16

RUANGAN : OPINION

NST Pg 16 OPINION 12/1/2025 (AHAD)

RISING CASES IN SCHOOLS

## Set up Mental Health Commission to address bullying

**I**N 2023, 4,994 cases of bullying in school were reported, a stark increase from 3,887 in 2022.

And what about those that go unreported?

Education Minister Fadhlina Sidek has emphasised the need for greater transparency in handling bullying cases and urged school administrators not to conceal the incidents.

To be fair, the ministry has been addressing the issue by increasing the number of school counsellors and implementing guidelines for managing bullying and sexual harassment.

But cases keep cropping up. Perhaps there needs to be a multi-ministry approach.

Studies have shown that children who experience violence, neglect or lack of attention at home may exhibit bullying behaviour to express their frustra-



**YONG SOO HEONG**

tions or seek control.

Peer pressure and the desire to fit in with a group can also cause children to bully others.

Some children do it to feel more powerful or to compensate for their insecurities and low self-esteem, or it could be a way to assert dominance and control over their peers.

Envy of others' appearance, abilities or possessions can drive

children to bully.

Children who struggle to understand or relate to the feelings of others may bully without recognising the harm they are causing.

Strangely, sometimes children bully others out of boredom or a need for excitement and stimulation.

In Datuk Dr Andrew Mohanraj Chandrasekaran's collection of essays published in his new book, *A Journey through Mental Health and Society*, he lays bare the situations of adolescents in Malaysia trapped in the shadows of mental health.

Citing statistics from the National Health and Morbidity Survey 2023, he says one million people, or 4.6 per cent of people aged 16 and above, displayed symptoms of depression.

This was double the figures from the survey in 2019, where

some 500,000 people had thoughts of hurting themselves or being better off dead.

These figures underscore the urgent need for mental health support and interventions.

Addressing these issues involves promoting a safe psychological environment and implementing targeted mental health programmes and policies by boosting mental health services, school-based mental health programmes, community support and awareness campaigns, and early intervention and prevention.

But the issue is easier said than done because of the access to social media at a young age.

While social media has become an integral part of our lives, it also has a dark side that feeds into our worst impulses, increasing frustration and anger. It can be an angry place, so to speak.

Dr Andrew advocates for early intervention through school mental health screenings and teacher training.

Perhaps legislation ought to be put in place to mete out severe penalties to the perpetrators and offer protection to victims.

A collaborative approach involving government, healthcare, schools, and caregiver organisations could lead to establishing a mental health commission.

This may prove to be a viable option.

The question isn't whether we can afford to implement these measures, but can we afford not to?

Each day of delay potentially results in more children experiencing bullying.

The writer is a former Bernama chief executive officer and editor-in-chief



AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN

MUKA SURAT : 25

RUANGAN : DUNIA

BH M1525 DUNIA 12/112025(AHAD)

# Penularan virus hMPV terkawal, tidak capai tahap pandemik

Lima tahun selepas virus SARS-CoV-2 melanda hospital di Wuhan, China, penyakit pernafasan akut disebabkan virus yang menjangkiti kanak-kanak dan warga tua, virus influenza serta virus sinsitium pernafasan (RSV), dilaporkan semakin meningkat, terutama di wilayah utara.

Paling mendapat perhatian adalah *human metapneumovirus* (hMPV), yang digembar-gemburkan sebagai mencapai 'tahap pandemik', sedangkan peningkatan mendadak penyakit pernafasan akut bukanlah sesuatu yang luar biasa saban tahun ketika musim sejuk.

Menurut seorang pegawai China, jumlah keseluruhan kes hMPV pada 2024 dijangka 'lebih kecil' berbanding 2023.

Malah, Pertubuhan Kesihatan Sedunia (WHO) dan Pusat Kawalan dan Pencegahan Penyakit (CDC) Amerika Syarikat (AS) setakat ini tidak menaikkan 'bendera merah', dengan hampir tiada laporan dikeluarkan media antarabangsa melainkan media Barat dan Asia Selatan.

Satu mesyuarat membabitkan Kumpulan Peman-tauan Bersama di bawah naungan Kesatuan Kementereian Kesihatan baru-baru ini menyimpulkan bahawa keadaan di China 'bukanlah di tahap luar biasa jika mengambil kira musim selesema yang berterusan', dan 'patogen biasa yang sememangnya dijangka' menyebabkan lonjakan penyakit berkaitan pernafasan.

Virus hMPV pertama kali dikenal pasti menjangkiti kanak-kanak di Belanda pada 2001.

Jangkitan hMPV biasanya berlaku pada usia lima tahun dengan jangkitan semula boleh berlaku sepanjang hayat kerana perlindungan imun atau kekebalan yang dicetuskan oleh virus terlalu lemah untuk

mencegah jangkitan berulang.

Virus ini menyebabkan jangkitan saluran pernafasan di bahagian atas, bawah atau kedua-duanya, dengan jangkitan saluran pernafasan bawah adalah antara yang paling biasa berlaku.

Walaupun virus ini kebiasaannya menyebabkan penyakit pernafasan dalam skala sederhana, ia boleh membawa kepada tahap penyakit teruk yang memerlukan kemasukan ke hospital bagi kanak-kanak, individu kurang daya imun, dan warga tua.

## Tingkat ujian pengesanan

Mengikut kajian tahun 2021, pada peringkat global, 3 hingga 10 peratus daripada kemasukan ke hospital dan satu peratus daripada kematian berkaitan jangkitan pernafasan rendah akut (LRTI) dalam kalangan kanak-kanak di bawah umur lima tahun pada 2018 dikaitkan dengan hMPV.

Kajian sama turut mendapati kanak-kanak bawah enam bulan, terutama mereka yang berada di negara berpendapatan rendah dan sederhana rendah, berdepan risiko kematian lebih tinggi disebabkan virus hMPV.

Pengesanan sebilangan besar kes hMPV dalam kalangan kanak-kanak berumur bawah 14 tahun di China adalah gambaran peningkatan tahap pengawasan dan ujian pengesanan bagi virus itu.

Sebaliknya, negara seperti India tidak memiliki sebarang ujian saringan meluas dengan harga yang murah dan diluluskan pihak berkuasa bagi diagnosis virus terbabit.

Ujian untuk hMPV membabitkan pesakit dengan penyakit pernafasan akut perlu dibuat secara rutin kerana virus itu sudah berada di persekitaran sela-

ma bertahun-tahun di seluruh dunia, dengan kadar kematian membabitkan kanak-kanak adalah pada kadar satu peratus.

Apa yang turut perlu dilakukan segera adalah rangka kerja kawal selia yang memudahkan kelulusan pantas ujian diagnostik dalam konteks wabak tempatan dan global membabitkan patogen baharu dan kurang dikenali.

Pakar kesihatan sebelum ini kurang memperhatikan mengenai hMPV. Malah, mereka menjelaskan virus itu sukar menular berbanding COVID-19.

Mereka turut menegaskan, hMPV tidak sepatutnya disamakan dengan COVID-19, mengambil kira asal usul wabak itu tidak diketahui sehingga virus itu muncul beberapa tahun lalu.

"Jangan bandingkan hMPV dengan COVID-19 kerana ia adalah virus baharu dan tiada seorang pun daripada kita mempunyai imuniti terhadapnya.

"hMPV sudah diketahui sejak 2001, malah berdasarkan bukti, ia bermula sejak penghujung 1950-an. Pada usia 10 tahun, kebanyakan kanak-kanak sudah memiliki imuniti terhadap hMPV," kata pakar kesihatan.

Bagi mengelakkan penyebaran hMPV, kerap amalan mencuci tangan menggunakan sabun dan air.

Etika pernafasan seperti menutup mulut dan hidung ketika bersin atau batuk dan memakai pelitup muka juga boleh mengurangkan penyebaran virus terbabit.

Selain itu, sebagai langkah pencegahan tambahan, orang ramai disarankan supaya mengelak daripada mempunyai kontak rapat dengan individu dijangkiti, selain kerap membersihkan permukaan yang kerap disentuh.

AGENCI



Pejalan kaki berjalan melepasi mural dinding yang mempromosikan penggunaan pelitup muka di Bengaluru susulan pengesanan kes hMPV di India.

(Foto AFP)



**AKHBAR : THE STAR**  
**MUKA SURAT : 3**  
**RUANGAN : YOUR BUSINESS**

THE STAR M/S 3 YOUR BUSINESS 12/1/2025 (AHAD)

By EMALIN ZALANI  
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HOW many "spoons" do you have left today?

For those with chronic illnesses, this often isn't just a question, but a way of life.

While individuals without chronic conditions may take their energy levels for granted, those managing chronic illnesses must treat their energy as a finite resource, symbolised as "spoons".

Spoon Theory, a concept developed in 2003 by American blogger and systematic lupus erythematosus (SLE) patient Christine Miserandino, has become an invaluable tool for explaining the daily challenges faced by people with chronic illnesses.

By using spoons as a metaphor, the theory illustrates how chronic pain, fatigue or disability impacts their energy levels, making it essential to ration energy carefully throughout the day.

Miserandino first came up with her Spoon Theory during a conversation with a friend at a diner.

Her friend had just asked what it was like to live with SLE.

To explain, Miserandino grabbed spoons from the table, using them to represent her daily energy supply.

Every activity from getting out of bed to preparing a meal required giving up one or more spoons.

When the spoons were gone, so was her ability to do anything else that day.

This simple, yet profound analogy offered a tangible way to describe the invisible limitations of chronic illness.

The concept resonated widely, offering people with chronic conditions a framework to articulate their struggles to loved ones.

Over time, it evolved into a global community of "Spoonies", individuals who embrace the concept as a tool for self-awareness, advocacy and mutual support.

#### A versatile metaphor

For United States-based advocate Linda Caserman, Spoon Theory became a turning point in her life.

Diagnosed with autoimmune hepatitis in 1995 and Hashimoto's disease in 1998, Caserman discovered the theory in 2005 and became involved in the online community Miserandino had created.

Caserman now manages the social media accounts for Miserandino's platform, But You Don't Look Sick.

"The community isn't just for people with lupus; it's for anyone managing chronic illness."

"Many experience overwhelming fatigue, and by sharing how I manage it, I hope to help others."

"It's become a support network for everyone," Caserman tells *StarHealth* in a video call.

This shared understanding extends beyond individual diagnoses, uniting people with various conditions under a common metaphor to explain their shared invisible challenges.

Whether managing autoimmune diseases, mental health challenges or invisible disabilities, the Spoonie community helps to foster connection, support and empathy.

In England, for example, the



For many with chronic illnesses, even getting out of bed can use up too much energy. — TNS

### Using your 'spoons'

If you only had 10 'spoons' per day, how would you use them?

**The Spoon Theory** is a metaphor that explains the daily energy limitations faced by people with chronic illnesses or disabilities. Created by Christine Miserandino, it uses spoons as a symbol for units of energy.

Note: "Spoon" consumption varies by individuals and is not a fixed measure applicable to everyone. This infographic is for illustration purposes only.

*The Star* graphics

These activities require <b>one spoon</b> each:			
Get out of bed	Get dressed	Take medicine	Brush teeth
These activities require <b>two spoons</b> each:			
Cook	Do laundry	Read book	Take shower
These activities require <b>three spoons</b> each:			
Climb the stairs	Do light housework	Go grocery shopping	Drive somewhere
These activities require <b>four spoons</b> each:			
Go to work or school	Exercise	See the doctor	Socialise with family or friends

concept has inspired initiatives like "Spoonie Kids", helping children with disabilities communicate their struggles.

It's also been widely embraced in mental health advocacy, 12-step meetings for substance addictions, and even creative outlets like plays and online games.

"Christine and I always say, as long as the Spoon Theory is used positively to explain fatigue or the realities of chronic illness, it doesn't matter who uses it," Caserman says.

"Even if someone without a diagnosis uses the metaphor to describe their exhaustion, it can still help foster understanding."

#### Simple tasks become difficult

Freelance painter Siti Suhaillah Hussein, known professionally as Sisu, credits the Spoon Theory with helping her manage her life with SLE.

Diagnosed in 2022, Sisu had to leave her retail job as her fatigue, swollen legs and joint pain made daily tasks unbearable.

Despite her challenges however, she managed to find a new path through art.

A therapeutic hobby turned into a full-time career when one of her live wedding paintings went viral on TikTok in 2024.

"Art became my therapy," she shares, balancing her artistic pursuits with the daily energy constraints of her condition.

For Sisu, who lives in Johor Bahru, the Spoon Theory is a daily guide.

"On a good day, I might have nine spoons."

"If I overexert myself, I'll have fewer the next day — maybe five," she explains.

By prioritising light exercise and art, she has found ways to replenish her spoons and maintain emotional well-being.

Sisu also emphasises the importance of family in managing chronic illness.

Her husband's unwavering support has been crucial, she shares.

"On tough days, my family understands when I need to rest, but there are still misunderstandings."

"People often think simple tasks like folding laundry are effortless, but for those of us battling chronic illness, they actually cost spoons," she says.

#### Being mindful and realistic

Psychologist Joyce Hue, who was diagnosed with encephalomyelitis when she was 10 years old, also relates deeply to the Spoon Theory.

Encephalomyelitis, which is usually triggered by infection, involves inflammation of the brain and spinal cord.

Hue endured severe physical impairments, including disrupted coordination, speech difficulties and the inability to perform basic tasks.

"For two years, I relied on a wheelchair to attend school. Eventually, I moved to using walkers, but every step was a struggle," she recalls.

With little professional mental health support available then, her parents' optimism was what fuelled her determination.

Over time, she adapted to her limitations, finding strength in acceptance rather than resistance.

Now a counsellor at a mental health clinic in Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Hue has developed a "RM100" analogy, similar to the Spoon Theory, which she often shares with her patients.

This analogy compares daily energy to a limited budget of RM100.

"For example, if you spend RM80 on a single activity early in the week, you'll have only RM20 left for the rest of the days," she explains.

This analogy helps her patients understand the importance of careful planning and accepting their limitations.

She points out that many people struggle when transitioning from being able-bodied to living with limitations.

"The Spoon Theory offers a structured way to prioritise activities, balancing what is essential with what is achievable."

"It's not about giving up; it's

about making mindful adjustments," she says.

She adds that the concept serves as an effective communication tool, especially for those with invisible symptoms.

"It can be hard for others to grasp why someone can no longer maintain their usual pace."

"Using relatable examples like spoons or budgets helps bridge this gap, enabling loved ones to better empathise with the challenges of managing limited resources," she says.

Hue also advises caregivers to listen actively and avoid assumptions.

"Listening to the patient's needs, rather than assuming what's best, is vital."

"Small acts of understanding, such as asking how to help or learning about the illness, can make a significant difference in the quality of support," she says.

#### Focusing on the present

For those navigating chronic illness, the Spoon Theory can become a framework for self-compassion.

By recognising their efforts within the constraints of their condition, individuals can focus on what they can achieve, rather than dwelling on what they've lost.

Living with chronic illness is a journey of resilience, adaptation and self-awareness.

Hue advises: "Don't lose hope. Ignore judgments from others and focus on your well-being."

"Life is about adaptation and finding joy in new ways."

"If one door closes, another path awaits — perhaps less conventional, but equally fulfilling."

Through personal determination, the support of loved ones and professional guidance, individuals can learn to thrive despite their limitations.

The Spoon Theory can serve as a powerful tool on this journey, fostering empathy and understanding for patients and their families as they navigate the challenges of chronic illness together.



AKHBAR : SINAR HARIAN

MUKA SURAT : 18

RUANGAN : SIHAT AKTIF

SINAR HARIAN M/s 18 'SIHAT AKTIF' 12/1/2025 (AHAD)

# Probiotik dan prebiotik untuk usus sihat

Pengambilan serat yang kurang bukan sahaja jejakkan sistem pencernaan, malah menyumbang peningkatan penyakit kronik lain

Oleh SITI NOOR AZIRA MOHD FAUZZI

**K**ESIHATAN usus memainkan peranan penting dalam memastikan kesejahteraan tubuh secara keseluruhan. Di tengah-tengah perkembangan dunia sains pemakanan, istilah seperti probiotik dan prebiotik semakin mendapat perhatian.

**Ketua Pakar Pemakanan di Jomsayheart Diet Centre, Syaza Lyana** berkata, probiotik adalah mikroorganisma hidup, khususnya



SYAZA LYANA

serta membantu sistem pencernaan kita. Sebagai contoh, satu gram tempe mengandungi sekitar 10 bilion probiotik.

Sementara itu, prebiotik ialah makanan kepada bakteria baik tersebut. Ia berfungsi sebagai sumber makanan untuk membantu bakteria berkembang dengan baik di dalam perut.

Prebiotik biasanya tidak dapat dihadam oleh badan manusia, tetapi ia penting untuk bakteria baik.

Antara contoh makanan yang mengandungi prebiotik ialah pisang (terutamanya yang kurang masak), bawang putih dan saleri.

Ber cerita tentang kesihatan usus, dalam kajian Kesihatan dan Morbiditi Kebangsaan (NHMS) 2023 mendedahkan bahawa 95.1 peratus dewasa di Malaysia tidak mengambil

buah dan sayur secukupnya setiap hari dengan purata hanya dua hidangan berbanding lima yang disyorkan.

Statistik ini amat membimbangkan kerana kekurangan pengambilan serat yang mencukupi bukan sahaja menjejaskan kesihatan sistem pencernaan tetapi juga boleh menyumbang kepada peningkatan penyakit kronik yang lain.

Suplemen probiotik boleh diambil, tetapi tujuannya bergantung kepada keperluan individu. Sebagai contoh:

- 1. Lactobacillus rhamnosus:** Sesuai untuk memulihkan kesan sampingan selepas mengambil antibiotik, kerana antibiotik boleh membunuh bakteria baik di usus.
- 2. Bifidobacterium:** Bagus untuk mengatasi masalah sindrom usus renga (IBS).
- 3. Streptococcus:** Membantu masalah kulit.

Walaupun suplemen probiotik mempunyai manfaat, kita perlu fokus kepada asas pemakanan iaitu dengan mengamalkan lebih banyak sayur-sayuran dan buah-buahan.

Ini kerana produk makanan tambahan hanya bertindak sebagai pelengkap, bukan pengganti.

Jika ingin mengambilnya, pastikan jumlah bakteria baik mencukupi. "Anda boleh mendapatkan nasihat yang lebih khusus sama ada daripada pakar dermatologi, pakar diet, atau ahli farmasi.

"Dengan panduan mereka, kita boleh dapatkan cadangan yang benar-benar sesuai. Sebenarnya ada ujian yang



SEBAIKNYA lengkapkan pengambilan probiotik melalui pemakanan.

boleh dilakukan untuk mengenal pasti tahap mikrobiom dalam badan.

"Ujian ini dilakukan melalui sampel najis dan daripada itu kita boleh analisis apa yang kurang dalam tubuh, termasuk jenis *strain* bakteria yang kurang.

"Ini adalah cara paling tepat untuk mengenal pasti keperluan probiotik atau mikrobiom seseorang.

"Berdasarkan keputusan ujian tersebut, kita boleh tahu jenis probiotik yang perlu diambil atau *strain* bakteria mana yang perlu ditambah dalam diet harian kita," kata beliau.

## Kesihatan usus

Dalam pada itu, Syaza turut menjelaskan jika seseorang itu mengalami simptom tidak selesa pada perut seperti kembung atau rasa nak ke tandas sentiasa

selepas mengambil suplemen probiotik, besar kemungkinan dosnya terlalu tinggi atau ia tidak sesuai dengan perut. Jadi, mulakan dengan dos yang rendah terlebih dahulu.

"Sebenarnya, sekarang ini banyak kajian yang fokus pada hubungan antara usus dan otak, yang dikenali sebagai *gut-brain axis*.

"Penyelidikan ini sangat menarik kerana ia menunjukkan kaitan kesihatan usus dengan masalah kesihatan mental seperti kebimbangan dan kemurungan.

"Di pusat kami sendiri, pesakit yang ada masalah seperti *major depressive disorder* (MDD) biasanya didapati kurang mikrobiom dalam usus mereka. Bila diberi probiotik dengan

*strain* tertentu, barulah ada peningkatan dalam keadaan mereka.

"Probiotik juga penting kerana ia boleh membantu mengurangkan keradangan, meningkatkan sistem imun dan menjaga kesihatan keseluruhan badan.

"Oleh sebab itu, kesihatan usus tak hanya untuk turunkan berat badan, tapi juga untuk kesihatan mental dan kesejahteraan umum," ujar Syaza.

Setakat ini, tiada saranan spesifik untuk jumlah probiotik yang perlu diambil setiap hari.

Paling penting, seseorang itu harus cukupkan pengambilan prebiotik seperti sayur dan buah.

Antara cadangan mudah yang boleh dipraktikkan adalah makan sayur sekurang-kurangnya tiga kali sehari.

Setiap hidangan ini diambil kira-kira empat sudu besar sayur yang dimasak atau satu cawan sayur mentah seperti ulam atau salad.

Pengambilan buah pula, dua hidangan dalam satu hari.

Oleh yang demikian, sudah memadai mendapatkan prebiotik daripada sayur-sayuran dan buah-buahan terlebih dahulu.

Itu yang paling penting dan asas kepada kesihatan yang lebih baik.

Sebenarnya tidak semua orang perlukan probiotik.

Memadai seseorang itu memenuhi keperluan probiotik melalui makanan harian.

Namun, jika ada keadaan tertentu seperti masalah *Irritable Bowel Syndrome* (IBS), barulah probiotik mungkin diperlukan untuk membantu keadaan tersebut.

KESIHATAN usus ada kaitan dengan masalah kesihatan mental seperti kebimbangan dan kemurungan