



PRESS RELEASE

Malaysia starts global “Solidarity Trial” - a research effort to test possible treatments for COVID-19

PUTRAJAYA, 6th April 2020 – The “Solidarity Trial”, launched by the World Health Organization (WHO), will see Malaysia’s involvement in an international effort to test several drugs in treating COVID-19.

The WHO globally coordinated trial is an unprecedented effort to collect reliable data and compare the safety and effectiveness of four treatment protocols using different combinations of Remdesivir, Lopinavir/Ritonavir, Interferon beta, Chloroquine and Hydroxychloroquine.

The Director General of Health, Ministry of Health (MOH) Malaysia Datuk Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said, MOH has fast-tracked the process to implement the drug trials to treat patients with COVID-19, which will begin soon. The nine MOH hospitals included are Tuanku Fauziah Hospital, Sultanah Bahiyah Hospital, Pulau Pinang Hospital, Sungai Buloh Hospital, Kuala Lumpur Hospital, Melaka Hospital, Tengku Ampuan Afzan Hospital, Sarawak General Hospital and Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

“The global pandemic is affecting more than 180 countries, and one of these drugs may be our best hope for treating people infected with COVID-19,” said Dr Ying-Ru Lo, the Head of Mission and WHO Representative to Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam and Singapore. “This is our chance, as a global

community, to turn the tide against the pandemic. Malaysia will be a valued partner in this trial to evaluate potential treatments that are more effective, and to save lives in the global battle to fight this virus.”

The research will be headed by Dr Chow Ting Soo, Infectious Disease (ID) Consultant at Pulau Pinang Hospital with a team comprising of 16 ID physicians and pharmacists as Co-Investigators at the respective MOH hospitals. Director General of Health, Datuk Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah gave his assurance that the trial will adhere to all safety standards set by the National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agency.

“Malaysia’s participation in this worldwide trial could help find life-saving medicines for COVID-19 through evaluating their safety and effectiveness,” said Datuk Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah. He added that MOH Institute for Clinical Research (ICR) and Clinical Research Malaysia (CRM) would help facilitate the implementation of the WHO-initiated trial in Malaysia.

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