

Fadhlina urges support for pregnant teens

KUALA LUMPUR: Teenage girls facing in out-of-wedlock pregnancies will continue to receive support to ensure they return to school and sit for the SPM examination, says the Education Minister.

Fadhlina Sidek (*pic*) said these students must be given every opportunity to continue their education and avoid dropping out of the school system.

"They should return to their studies after completing their confinement period. I am very firm on this matter."

"There can be no shortcuts in life because education is key to breaking the cycle of violence and rebuilding one's future."

"The ministry will usually assist these students to return to school, and ensure they are able to sit for the SPM without disruption to their education," she said in a Facebook post yesterday, Bernama reported.

Fadhlina said teenage pregnan-

cy should be addressed through a support, protection and education-based approach to safeguard the welfare of both mother and child.

She said once a pregnancy was discovered, the teenager should be taken to the nearest health clinic or rural health centre to register for maternal healthcare and open a pregnancy health record or the "pink book".

"The priority must be the pregnancy and the health of the young girl. The younger the teenager, the greater the risks to both her pregnancy and her health. The government healthcare system is fully equipped and has the expertise to manage these cases," she said.

The minister also advised parents to lodge a police report and arrange counselling support immediately so that the teenager



has access to appropriate follow-up action.

Fadhlina also shared a media report of a young mother who pleaded guilty to causing the death of her baby in Johor on Wednesday.

She said the case was particularly distressing to her as a former activist involved in setting up Bayt Al-Rahmah, a shelter for girls facing out-of-wedlock pregnancies.

Addressing challenges faced by parents and feelings of shame and anger, Fadhlina said institutions such as Bayt Al-Rahmah played an important role in providing a safe environment and protection for expectant mothers until childbirth.

"The government also provides similar support services through the Social Welfare Department, which offers shelter and protec-

tion under government-run institutions," she said.

Fadhlina said the post-partum period is a critical phase that could lead to depression or other mental health complications if adequate care is not provided.

Comprehensive support, including healthcare, breastfeeding assistance and continuous counselling, she pointed out, is essential in ensuring that young mothers did not face overwhelming stress.

"There are many young girls out there who are frightened and worried about their pregnancies. What is far more important is that we adopt preventive and supportive approaches when seeking solutions to this social issue."

"We can save the lives of both mothers and children by acting early, trusting the system and building strong support networks within our communities," she added.

Johor pumps RM66mil into healthcare upgrades

By YEE XIANG YUN
xiangyun@thestar.com.my

ISKANDAR PUTERI: Over RM66mil has been spent by the Johor government to upgrade public healthcare facilities in the state in the past four years despite it being a federal matter, says Datuk Onn Hafiz Ghazi.

The caretaker Johor Mentri Besar said he cannot ignore the issues related to public healthcare as it affects the lives of four million Johoreans.

"I know healthcare is under the Federal Government's responsibilities but I cannot keep quiet and turn a blind eye."

"If we follow the old ways, we do not need to fork out RM66mil but we have been going to the ground to address and improve the issues and situation," he said before launching the state-level World Nurse's Day celebration yesterday.

Onn Hafiz also added that he will continue supporting the state Health Department, including pursuing vacancies of doctors and nurses to be filled as



All smiles: Onn Hafiz (centre row, fourth from left) and caretaker state health and environment committee chairman Ling (third from left) posing for a photo with nurses at the state-level World Nurse's Day at Iskandar Puteri. — YEE XIANG YUN/The Star

soon as possible.

At the event, he also announced an allocation of RM500,000 to the state's nurses and RM100,000 for medical assistants in appreciation for their hard work and dedication.

Earlier, caretaker state health

and environment committee chairman Ling Tian Soon said the RM66mil spent throughout the administration's tenure covered upgrades to healthcare infrastructure, toilets, pantries and surau as well as the purchase of medical and non-

medical equipment.

He said among their notable efforts were decanting certain services from the Gelang Patah health clinic to new premises late last year, which has helped to disperse patient volume and ease the burden of healthcare workers.

When medication changes the way you exercise

FOR many Malaysians, staying active is part of their efforts to lead healthier lifestyles. For those who are living with chronic conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, asthma and high cholesterol, daily medication has become part of their routine alongside walking shoes, fitness watches and gym memberships.

Both exercise and medication are important for health. However, the two can sometimes influence one another in unexpected ways.

Exercise places stress on the body, although it is usually a beneficial form of stress. Heart rate increases, breathing becomes faster, blood vessels expand and muscles demand more energy. In response, the body adapts over time, becoming stronger and more efficient.

But medication can alter many of these same physiological processes. Someone taking beta-blockers for hypertension, for example, may notice that their heart rate does not rise as easily during exercise. Even when exerting significant effort, they may struggle to reach the same training intensity as before.

This can be frustrating, especially for individuals who closely monitor performance during workouts. In many cases, the medication itself is contributing to the slower cardiovascular response.

For individuals with asthma, certain inhalers may produce



Photo: 123rf.com

temporary sensations such as shakiness or palpitations during exercise. Meanwhile, people living with diabetes who combine glucose-lowering medication with intense physical activity may face the risk of hypoglycaemia, particularly if meals or hydration are not properly managed beforehand.

Symptoms such as dizziness, trembling, confusion or sudden fatigue during exercise should never be ignored. Sometimes, the issue is not poor fitness or lack of effort but rather the way medication and physical exertion are interacting within the body.

This is something I frequently observe among patients undergoing rehabilitation programmes, including cancer survivors grad-

ually rebuilding their strength after treatment.

The interaction between exercise and medication is also not limited to how drugs affect the body during physical activity. Exercise itself can influence how medications behave inside the body.

Changes in blood circulation, hydration, metabolism and body temperature during exercise may alter how certain medications are absorbed and processed.

Someone taking diuretics, commonly known as water pills, may already be losing significant amounts of fluid through urination. Combined with prolonged outdoor exercise in Malaysia's hot and humid climate, this may increase the risk of dehydration, dizziness or fainting.

At the same time, modern fitness culture has also introduced another layer of complexity through supplements and performance-enhancing products. As many of these products are sold openly, people often assume they are harmless.

However, some supplements contain extremely high levels of caffeine or other stimulants that may interact with prescription medications, particularly those related to blood pressure and heart function. Without proper understanding, combining multiple stimulants with existing medication may place unnecessary strain on the cardiovascular system.

This does not mean people should avoid exercise simply because they take medication. In fact, regular physical activity remains one of the most effective ways to improve long-term health and maintain quality of life.

What it does mean is that exercise should not always be approached with a one-size-fits-all mindset. Patients should feel comfortable discussing their exercise habits openly with doctors and pharmacists, including the type, frequency and intensity of their workouts.

Likewise, fitness trainers should be aware when clients are managing chronic medical conditions or taking long-term medication, as this may influence exercise tolerance and recovery.

Most importantly, people should learn to pay attention to their own bodies. Feeling challenged during exercise is normal. Persistent chest discomfort, severe dizziness, unusual fatigue, abnormal heartbeats or sudden weakness are not.

Sometimes, understanding how your own body responds to medication may be just as important as the workout itself.

DR MOHD YUSMAIDIE AZIZ
Senior lecturer
Department of Toxicology
Pusat Kanser Tun Abdullah
Ahmad Badawi
Universiti Sains Malaysia

Starlifestyle M/S 8

Hidden liver danger with common sweetener

« K < HILLE

THE common sugar-free sweetener sorbitol may damage your liver in the same way as the older sweetener fructose, researchers found.

Fructose, coming in at four calories per gramme, is popularly used in soft drinks and processed foods because it does not interact with blood insulin.

However, it was previously found to trigger processes linked to fatty liver disease in people without a history of drinking alcohol, affecting up to a quarter of adults and a growing number of younger people.

The most surprising finding from the current work is that because sorbitol is essentially "one transformation away from fructose", it can induce similar effects, said study senior author and Washington University

School of Medicine professor of chemistry, genetics and medicine Dr Gary Patti in a university press release.

Gut microbes play a key role.

"If you have the right bacteria, turns out, it doesn't matter," he said.

"However, if you don't have the right bacteria, that's when it becomes problematic.

"Because in those conditions, sorbitol doesn't get degraded, and as a result, it is passed on to the liver."

While examining zebrafish, whose digestive processes resemble those of humans, the researchers found that the fishes with gut biota depleted by antibiotics converted sorbitol into fructose in the liver, leading to an unhealthy build-up of fat in the organ.

The liver is the largest organ inside the body and is essential to

digesting food, storing energy and clearing poisons from the blood.

As fatty liver has few symptoms, most people aren't diagnosed with this condition until it has advanced towards cirrhosis or liver cancer, according to MedlinePlus.

People with type 2 diabetes or prediabetic conditions are most at risk, along with factors like obesity, age, and high cholesterol and blood pressure.

Symptoms can include being excessively tired or having pain in the upper right part of your abdomen.

The research suggests that sorbitol and fructose can be as bad for your liver as excessive drinking – the other main cause of fatty liver disease – while a healthy gut biome helps protect your liver.

Regular, low levels of sorbitol – touted for its low-calorie count



Research suggests that the sweeteners sorbitol and fructose could be as bad for your liver as excessive drinking. – TNS

and marketed as diabetes-friendly – are not likely to cause harm, the researchers said.

However, excessive amounts could overwhelm the gut bacteria that convert it into a harmless byproduct, causing it to be processed by the liver into a form of fructose instead.

Consuming excessive amounts of sugar can also cause glucose to be converted into large amounts of sorbitol in the body, leading to the same situation.

The study was published in last October's issue of the journal *Science Signaling*. – The Baltimore Sun/Tribune News Service

Facing up to cancer recurrence

“WILL my cancer come back?” It is a question that haunts many breast cancer survivors.

A cancer diagnosis is already an immensely challenging journey, but facing it all over again when one assumes one has “won” the battle can shake the faith of even the most resilient survivor.

Breast cancer remains the most common cancer affecting women in Malaysia, accounting for 30 per cent of female cancers and claiming nine lives daily — a reality that carries a significant social and economic burden, making the disease a national concern.

For many patients, the challenge extends beyond initial treatment, with one in six early breast cancer patients (Stage II and III) with the HR+/HER2- subtype facing a risk of recurrence within three years.

At the recent “Living Well, Living Longer: The Hidden Risk of Breast Cancer Recurrence” roundtable discussion, Novartis Malaysia shared findings from a perception survey commissioned through IQVIA, showing that two in three breast cancer patients (69 per cent) are concerned or extremely concerned about the risk of recurrence, with 41 per cent

NOVARTIS

Living Well, Living Longer

Media roundtable discussion on the hidden risk of breast cancer recurrence



There is a need for more proactive and regular conversations about recurrence risk between patients and healthcare providers, ensuring every patient understands their individual risk and can navigate their care with confidence.

PICTURE CREDIT: NOVARTIS MALAYSIA

thinking about it often.

Despite this high level of concern, 45 per cent said they rarely think about recurrence as it is not regularly discussed during doctor visits.

This underscores the urgent need for more proactive and regular conversations about recurrence risk between patients and healthcare providers, ensuring every patient understands their individual risk and can navigate their care with confidence.

Consultant breast surgeon Professor Emeritus Datuk Dr Yip Cheng Har says the reality is that even after a successful initial treatment, tumour cells may remain undetected.

A tumour as small as one cubic millimetre can contain up to 100,000 cells and it only takes a single cancer cell for the disease to return.

“While recurrence risk differs from one person to another, normalising these conversations allows clinicians to

better support patients in understanding their individual risk and long-term care needs.”

Additionally, the survey found that 57 per cent of patients fully understood the importance of adjuvant therapies such as hormone therapy, chemotherapy and targeted therapy in reducing the risk of recurrence among early breast cancer patients, with advice from family and physicians being the main driver of compliance.

A patient’s perception of their quality of life was also found to influence their approach to ongoing treatment, highlighting an important consideration in care.

Consultant clinical oncologist Dr Kua Voon Fong says patients want more time — time with their families, and time to live without constant worry about recurrence. Encouragingly, advances in post-treatment care are helping to address this.

“Today, some treatment options can

continue to work beyond primary therapy and help extend recurrence-free survival for patients with high-risk early breast cancer. However, these benefits are closely linked to treatment adherence.”

When patients are supported to maintain a good quality of life, they are more likely to continue recommended adjuvant therapy, leading to improved outcomes.

The perception survey highlights why progress for early breast cancer patients cannot happen in silos, says Novartis Malaysia, Brunei and Asia Emerging Markets country president Sanjeev Balachandran.

Helping Malaysians live well and live longer means bringing together healthcare professionals, patient advocacy groups and partners across the system to strengthen awareness and enable more informed decision-making around recurrence risk.

meera@nst.com.my



Breast cancer remains the most common cancer affecting women in Malaysia, accounting for 30 per cent of female cancers and claiming nine lives daily.

PICTURE CREDIT: JCOMP — FREEPIK

Johor peruntuk lebih RM66j perkasa sektor kesihatan awam negeri

Iskandar Puteri: Kerajaan Negeri Johor membelanjakan lebih RM66 juta bagi memperkasa sektor kesihatan awam negeri sepanjang tempoh empat tahun pentadbirannya.

Menteri Besar, Johor Datuk Onn Hafiz Ghazi, berkata peruntukan itu disalurkan bagi memastikan kebajikan dan kesihatan kira-kira empat juta rakyat negeri ini terus terpelihara.

Katanya, kerajaan negeri tidak boleh berdiam diri dan sentiasa menitikberatkan isu kesihatan awam kerana ia membabitkan nyawa rakyat.

“Jika mengikut cara lama kerajaan negeri tidak perlu mengeluarkan lebih RM66 juta untuk Jabatan Kesihatan Negeri Johor (JKNJ), namun apabila membabitkan nyawa hampir empat juta rakyat Johor kita tidak boleh menutup mata dan memekakkan telinga.

“Sebab itu saya tidak pernah teragak-agak untuk turun padang bagi memperkasa JKNJ dan saya akan terus memberikan perhatian kepada sektor kesihatan awam negeri ini,” katanya ketika berucap merasmikan Sambutan Hari Jururawat Peringkat Negeri Johor di sini semalam yang turut



Onn Hafiz menyempurnakan gimik perasmian Sambutan Hari Jururawat Peringkat Negeri Johor di Iskandar Puteri, semalam. (Foto Najmi Nor'Azam/BH)

dihadiri Pengarah Kesihatan Johor, Dr Mohtar Pungut.

Onn Hafiz berkata, kerajaan negeri juga akan terus membantu mencari penyelesaian terhadap isu kekurangan tenaga kerja kesihatan, khususnya membabitkan jururawat dan doktor di Johor.

“Di Johor, kita tahu terdapat kekurangan jururawat dan doktor. Kita akan bersama-sama mencari kaedah terbaik bagi memastikan kekosongan jawatan

ini dapat diisi dengan segera,” katanya.

Pada majlis sama, Onn Hafiz turut mengumumkan peruntukan RM500,000 kepada jururawat di seluruh Johor sebagai tanda penghargaan atas jasa serta pengorbanan mereka, selain RM100,000 kepada pembantu perubatan di negeri ini.

Langkah itu sebagai usaha berterusan kerajaan negeri memperkukuh penghargaan terhadap pe-

tugas kesihatan dengan meningkatkan peruntukan kepada jururawat dan pembantu perubatan sebagai pengiktirafan terhadap sumbangan mereka kepada sektor kesihatan.

Beliau berkata, peruntukan kepada jururawat negeri itu menunjukkan peningkatan berterusan sejak 2023, iaitu RM200,000 pada tahun pertama, RM300,000 pada tahun berikutnya dan RM400,000 pada 2025. BERNAMA

Isu rokok konvensional, produk nikotin alternatif cetus perdebatan

Percanggahan besar dalam landskap kesihatan awam jadi cabaran pembuat dasar

Daripada Kamarulzaidi Kamis
bbibiz@nstp.com.my
di Warsaw, Poland



Warsaw: Penganjuran Global Forum on Nicotine (GFN) 2026 di Warsaw bermula 3 Jun 2026 membangkitkan perdebatan mengenai satu percanggahan besar dalam landskap kesihatan awam global apabila rokok konvensional yang membakar tembakau terus kekal sah dan mudah diperolehi, walaupun dikaitkan dengan jutaan kematian setiap tahun.

Pada masa sama, pelbagai produk nikotin alternatif yang dianggap mempunyai risiko lebih rendah seperti vape, pauch nikotin, snus gaya Sweden dan produk tembakau yang dipanaskan berdepan ancaman larangan menyeluruh atau separa di banyak negara.

Institusi antarabangsa yang berpengaruh seperti Pertubuhan Kesihatan Sedunia (WHO) menyokong pelaksanaan larangan atau sekatan ketat terhadap produk berkenaan atas alasan melindungi kesihatan awam.

Menurut penganjur persidangan itu, Global Forum on Nicotine Ltd, maklumat yang salah

mengenai pengurangan kemudahan tembakau adalah meluas, walaupun terdapat bukti saintifik yang kukuh menyokong pendekatan tersebut.

Kedua itu menimbulkan persoalan sama ada larangan terhadap produk alternatif berkenaan sebenarnya menjejaskan matlamat kesihatan awam kerana ia berpotensi mengekalkan tabiat merokok konvensional dalam kalangan pengguna.

Selain itu, kesan rantaian daripada dasar berkenaan turut dikatakan menyumbang kepada perkembangan pasaran haram produk tembakau dan nikotin, sekali gus memberi implikasi negatif terhadap ekonomi.

Perdebatan itu juga berkait rapat dengan dapatan saintifik yang menunjukkan nikotin bukan penyebab utama kanser.

Sebaliknya, ribuan bahan kimia toksik yang terhasil daripada proses pembakaran tembakau dikenali pasti sebagai punca utama pelbagai penyakit berkaitan merokok.

"Dianggarkan lebih 140 juta individu di seluruh dunia menggunakan produk nikotin alternatif yang lebih rendah risiko, dengan sebahagian besar daripada mereka dilaporkan berjaya meninggalkan tabiat merokok."

"Bagaimanapun, campur tangan badan antarabangsa dalam aspek kedaulatan negara dilihat terus merumitkan usaha kerajaan untuk merangka dasar kesihatan awam yang bersesuaian dengan keperluan tempatan," katanya.

Ironinya, peranti vape yang pada asalnya dicipta oleh ahli farmasi China, Hon Lik, bagi membantu perokok berhenti merokok, kini menjadi antara sasaran utama kempen



Penganjuran Global Forum on Nicotine (GFN) 2026 di Warsaw.

larangan di pelbagai negara.

Selubungan itu, kerangka pengawal seliaan yang berkesan dilihat perlu diwujudkan bagi memastikan perlindungan terhadap golongan belia dapat diseimbangkan dengan potensi pengurangan kemudahan dan beban penyakit berkaitan merokok di peringkat global.

Berdepan cabaran besar

Sementara itu, pegawai kerajaan dan penggubal dasar kini berdepan cabaran besar dalam merangka kawal selia yang berkesan bagi menangani isu kesihatan awam di negara masing-masing.

Mereka perlu mengimbangi keimbangan terhadap penggunaan dalam kalangan belia dengan usaha mengurangkan beban penyakit dalam kalangan perokok dewasa.

Bagaimanapun, dasar kesihatan sesebuah negara sering dipeengaruhi oleh pertubuhan luar yang mempromosikan larangan

penuh terhadap produk alternatif.

Menurut kenyataan Global Forum on Nicotine (GFN), "Polisi larangan atau sekatan disokong oleh institusi global yang berpengaruh seperti Pertubuhan Kesihatan Sedunia, dengan justifikasi perlindungan".

Kedua itu menimbulkan kebingungan mengenai kesan organisasi antarabangsa terhadap kedaulatan negara dalam menentukan hala tuju dasar awam masing-masing.

Tekanan luar itu mewujudkan percanggahan dasar apabila kerajaan terpaksa menyekat inovasi yang dianggap lebih selamat, sedangkan rokok konvensional yang terbukti berbahaya masih dibenarkan.

Campur tangan itu turut berisiko mencetuskan perkembangan pasaran gelap tempatan apabila pengguna tidak lagi mempunyai akses kepada produk sah di pasaran.

Ia juga dikatakan mengabaikan

hakikat bahawa lebih 140 juta individu di seluruh dunia telah beralih kepada alternatif nikotin yang berisiko lebih rendah.

Keumikan GFN ialah pendekatan pintu terbuka yang menghimpunkan pelbagai pihak berkepentingan untuk membincangkan dasar secara lebih inklusif.

Namun, terdapat dakwaan bahawa pengeluar dan persatuan pengguna sering diketepikan daripada perbincangan antarabangsa, sekali gus menjadikan proses pembentukan dasar kurang seimbang.

Peranti moden hasil inovasi Hon Lik kini dilihat terperangkap dalam perdebatan antara autonomi negara dan pengaruh organisasi antarabangsa.

Selubungan itu, setiap negara berdaulat wajar diberi ruang untuk menggubal dasar berasaskan bukti saintifik pengurangan kemudahan yang sesuai dengan konteks tempatan tanpa tekanan ideologi luar.

ETNIK ROHINGYA PENYUMBANG TERTINGGI

ANCAMAN MALARIA IMPORT

Jabatan Kesihatan Negeri Terengganu mengeluarkan amaran tinggi susulan peningkatan kes malaria dalam kalangan warga Rohingya di negeri itu. Setakat ini, 10 daripada 17 kes yang direkodkan membabitkan jangkitan malaria jenis Plasmodium Vivax dalam kalangan etnik Rohingya kategori import. Hasil siasatan mendapati semua kes berkenaan dipercayai berkaitan individu yang memasuki negara ini secara tidak sah, selain maklumat berkaitan pergerakan mereka sukar diperoleh.

lapor Mohd Ishak Abdillah Ngah



MS2

Oleh Mohd Ishak
Abdillah Ngah
am@hmetro.com.my

Kuala Terengganu

Jabatan Kesihatan Negeri Terengganu (JKNT) mengeluarkan amaran tinggi susulan peningkatan kes malaria dalam kalangan warga Rohingya di negeri ini.

Sektor Kawalan Penyakit Bawaan Vektor, JKNT setakat ini menerima 17 kes malaria dengan 10 daripadanya membabitkan jangkitan malaria jenis Plasmodium Vivax dalam kalangan warga Rohingya kategori import.

Kes terbaharu malaria dikesan di daerah Dungun

JKNT keluar amaran tinggi!

Kes malaria dalam kalangan warga Rohingya di Terengganu catat peningkatan membimbangkan

dan Kuala Nerus.

Hasil siasatan mendapati semua kes itu dipercayai membabitkan individu memasuki negara ini secara tidak sah, selain maklumat berkaitan pergerakan mereka sukar diperoleh.

Sehubungan itu, semua hospital, klinik kesihatan

dan klinik desa di Terengganu diarahkan mempergiat aktiviti saringan melalui pendekatan *Active Case Detection* (ACD) dan *Passive Case Detection* (PCD).

Langkah ini termasuk menjalankan pemeriksaan terhadap semua warga Rohingya yang hadir ke fasiliti

kesihatan, termasuk ibu mengandung dan individu yang telah lama berada di Malaysia.

Pihak berkuasa kesihatan turut menegaskan tindakan segera perlu diambil bagi membendung penularan jangkitan kepada masyarakat tempatan.