

AKHBAR : SINAR HARIAN

MUKA SURAT : 34

RUANGAN : SINAR UTARA

## Desak kerajaan tangani isu arak murah

**BUKIT MERTA JAM** - Pergerakan Anti Arak Murah Malaysia akan mengadakan satu perhimpunan di pekarangan Parlimen pada sidang akan datang sekiranya kerajaan tidak mengambil sebarang tindakan berhubung isu penjualan arak murah di pasaran.

Ketuanya, David Mars-hel berkata, sebelum ini pihaknya telah membuat beberapa tuntutan kepada kerajaan dalam menangani isu ini termasuk penguatkuasaan Akta Makanan 1983 (Pindaan 2016) untuk mengawal penjualan arak murah di Malaysia.

Menurutnya, Peraturan-peraturan Makanan 1983, telah dipinda dan diwartakan pada 2016 (386A) selain dimaklumkan bahawa akan dikuatkuasakan 1 Disember 2017.

Namun penguatkuasaan telah ditangguh atas desakan pihak Persatuan Pengilang dan Pembotolan Arak Malaysia.

"Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) di bawah kerajaan dahulu tidak menyatakan tarikh baharu



David (kiri) bertemu dengan Menteri Kesihatan, Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad (dua dari kanan) kelmarin bagi mengutarakan beberapa isu mengenai penjualan arak murah.

penguatkuasaan terhadap peraturan 386A. Selepas kerajaan Pakatan Harapan (PH) memerintah, kami berharap menteri baharu akan kuatkuasakan peraturan 386A tetapi sehingga kini ia belum dapat dilaksanakan," katanya dalam satu kenyataan semalam.

David berkata, KKM telah menangguhkan sebanyak dua kali tarikh penguatkuasaan peraturan baharu dan yang lebih menyedihkan apabila pihaknya diberitahu KKM telah memba-

talkan peraturan tersebut.

"Kami berharap agar kerajaan mewujudkan satu Pusat Rehabilitasi Alkohol yang lengkap dengan kemudahan seperti pusat serenti untuk memulih penagih arak agar supaya mereka dapat kembali ke pangkuan keluarga dengan sihat.

"Kami juga memohon kerajaan melakukan satu kajian terhadap masalah komplikasi kesihatan dan sosial oleh pengguna atau peminum arak khasnya arak murah," katanya.

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES

MUKA SURAT : 26

RUANGAN : HEAL/HEALTH



Oral steroids should be taken after food.  
PICTURES BY FREEPIK

*Patients are advised to consult their doctors or pharmacists if they encounter any problems while taking steroids.*

# Steroids: Use with caution

Medicines containing steroids should be used based on dose and duration and under a doctor's supervision

**S**TEROIDS are compounds, which are naturally produced by the human body and play an important role in many physiological processes.

Steroids can also refer to man-made substances (synthetic substances) that are used in the treatment of certain diseases.

In Malaysia, steroids are classified as controlled substances and medicines containing steroids can only be prescribed by a doctor, while certain creams and ointments with low-dose steroids may be obtained through pharmacists.

## STEROID USE IN MEDICINE

There are two types of steroids used in medicine, namely anabolic steroids and corticosteroids.

Anabolic steroids are synthetic substances that act the same way as the male sex hormone testosterone.

Anabolic steroids are often used to treat hormonal problems among males and can also be used to build lean muscle in patients who have muscle-wasting diseases such as AIDS (Autoimmune Deficiency Syndrome).

Medicines containing anabolic steroids can only be prescribed by a doctor and

obtained from hospitals, clinics and community pharmacies.

Corticosteroids, on the other hand, act as anti-inflammatory medicines and are usually prescribed for patients with asthma, eczema and arthritis.

Corticosteroids also suppress the body's immune system and are, therefore, widely used in the treatment of autoimmune diseases as well as to prevent organ rejection in patients who receive organ transplants.

Some examples of commonly used corticosteroids are prednisolone, hydrocortisone, betamethasone and dexamethasone.

Medicines containing corticosteroids come in various forms such as creams, ointments, inhalers, eye/ear/nose drops, tablets and injections.

## DOSAGE

The dose and duration of treatment with corticosteroids will differ for each individual depending on the disease condition and their health status. A patient must always take steroids according to the dose and duration as prescribed by the doctor.

If steroids are taken for a prolonged period of time, the dose may be reduced over time in order to avoid side effects which may occur due to sudden discontinuation in treatment.

Patients are advised to consult their doctors or pharmacists if they encounter any problems while taking steroids so that the doctor can modify the dose to fit the patient's needs.

## ARE CORTICOSTEROIDS DANGEROUS?

As with any other medicine, there are risks associated with prolonged use of corticosteroids, but the benefits outweigh the risks.

Individuals on steroid medications will have regular follow-ups with the prescribing doctor who will continuously assess and monitor them for development of any side effects and act on this should there be any.

Oral steroids should be taken after food in order to reduce gastric irritation. Short-term side effects commonly experienced include weight gain and fluid retention.

Facial swelling (oedema) commonly known as "moon face" can also occur as a result of prolonged use of oral corticosteroids.

Topical corticosteroids in the form of creams and ointments can cause skin thinning with prolonged use and thus increase the risk of sustaining injuries such as bruises and cuts.

Individuals who use topical steroids are advised to use it sparingly and only for a short period of time unless directed by a doctor.

Using corticosteroids over a long period of time can cause bones to become brittle and may also disrupt growth in young children.

As long-term use of corticosteroid increases the risk of developing eye problems such as cataracts, it is advisable to go for eye check-ups regularly in order to maintain good eye health.

## STEROID ABUSE

Steroid abuse and misuse has been associated with a myriad of diseases such as high blood pressure, heart disease, kidney damage and liver damage among others.

Taking steroids without a doctor or pharmacist's supervision is dangerous.

There are athletes who misuse steroids, especially anabolic steroids, for the purpose of gaining strength and a competitive edge in sports, which is known in the sports industry as "doping".

Once an athlete is caught doping, he/she will be removed from the sport or will face a lengthy ban from the sport as doping is considered cheating.

The community is also advised not to use unregistered health products that promise fast cures, miraculous outcomes and are supported with unrealistic testimonies.

Often, these products have been adulterated with large amounts of steroids. Use of such products pose a great health risk.

Always choose health products that are registered with the Ministry of Health as their quality, efficacy and safety have been evaluated.

If there are any inquiries regarding medicines, please call the National Pharmacy Call Centre (NPCC) at the toll-free line 1800-88-6722 during weekdays from 8am to 5pm.

Article prepared by Heygaajivan Kernas, pharmacist, Ministry of Health Malaysia.

AKHBAR : THE STAR

MUKA SURAT : 12

RUANGAN : NATION

## Doc: Society must change wrong views about cancer

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Society must overcome the misplaced notion that cancer means the end of the road, says oncologist Dr Ros Suzanna Ahmad Bustaman.

The head of Hospital Kuala Lumpur's Radiotherapy and Oncology Department said various options were available, especially when help was sought early.

"From my personal experience, once, a husband refused to allow his wife who has been diagnosed with breast cancer to undergo surgery. This is terrifying and the public must be constantly reminded of how bad it would be for society if this scenario persists.

"Sadly, the number of breast cancer cases in Malaysia is increasing, and there are still a lot of patients who refuse to seek help as they are in denial, and could not accept that they have cancer," she said.

According to Global Cancer Statistics 2018, an online database that provides estimates of incidence and mortality in 185 countries for 36 types of cancer, the highest number of cancer cases reported in Malaysia is breast cancer, with 7,593 cases reported in 2018, making it the number one threat to Malaysian women.

Dr Ros explains that 40% of patients only realised they have cancer when it has already reached stage three or four. — Bernama