

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN

MUKA SURAT : 4

RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Syor ujian klinikal Ivermectin pada awal jangkitan

Kuala Lumpur: Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) disaran melakukan kajian klinikal Ivermectin membabitkan individu yang dijangkiti COVID-19 pada peringkat awal bagi menentukan keberkesanannya sebagai ubat profilaktik atau pencegahan.

Felo Akademi Sains Malaysia (ASM), Prof Dr Mustafa Ali Mohd, yang berpengalaman luas dalam bidang farmakologi berkata, kajian klinikal itu perlu membabitkan pemberian Ivermectin mengikut dos bersesuaian kepada pesakit kategori awal dan bukan kategori yang lebih teruk.

Beliau berkata, ini kerana penelitian pakar mendapati pengambilan Ivermectin bersama Vitamin C dan Zink berupaya mencegah risiko dijangkiti COVID-19.

"Ivermectin bukan dikhususkan atau dirumuskan untuk merawat COVID-19, tetapi ia berupaya memberi kesan pencegahan dan mengawal pesakit daripada menjadi lebih teruk, jika diambil dari peringkat awal mengikut dos ditetapkan."

"Kajian klinikal KKM ini juga harus melihat secara perbandingan antara Ivermectin dengan ubat lain yang mahal dan digunakan dalam garis panduan merawat COVID-19 seperti remdesivir," katanya kepada *BH*, semalam.

Beliau mengulas kenyataan Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah, kelmarin bahawa KKM mengesyorkan penggunaan Ivermectin dalam garis panduan sedia ada merawat COVID-19 susulan keputusan kajian klinikal membabitkan 490 pesakit kategori 2 dan 3.

Kajian perbandingan dengan pesakit yang diberikan kaedah penjagaan standard (SOC), antara lain mendapati pemberian Ivermectin tidak menunjukkan sebarang perbezaan dari segi menangan risiko kemerosotan keadaan kesihatan pesakit, selain risiko kematian dalam tempoh 28 hari.

Prof Dr Mustafa berkata, keputusan kajian KKM bahawa ubat berkenaan tidak berkesan dalam menangani kemerosotan keadaan kesihatan pesakit sudah dijangka kerana Ivermectin bukan untuk merawat COVID-19, sebaliknya secara farmakologi dan mekanisme tersendiri, ia berfungsi dalam membantu menghalang serta mencegah COVID-19.

"Jika beri Ivermectin kepada pesakit kategori 2 dan 3, sudah pasti keputusan kajian akan menunjukkan ubat ini tidak berkesan berbanding kaedah penjagaan standard (SOC)," katanya.

Penularan COVID-19

Ada remaja tak hadir temu janji suntikan dos kedua

Sasaran 80 peratus kadar vaksinasi tak dapat dicapai 11 November

Kuala Lumpur: Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) mendapati terdapat remaja yang tidak memenuhi atau menghadiri janji temu dos kedua vaksin COVID-19 seperti ditetapkan.

Timbalan Menteri Kesihatan, Datuk Dr Noor Azmi Ghazali, berkata keadaan itu menyebabkan sasaran 80 peratus kadar vaksinasi dos kedua bagi remaja tidak dapat dicapai pada tarikh yang ditetapkan iaitu pada 11 November ini.

Beliau yang juga Pengerusi Jawatankuasa Bertindak Imunisasi COVID-19 (PICK) Remaja berkata, berdasarkan pemantauan

unjuran janji temu dos kedua terkini, sasaran berkenaan hanya akan tercapai pada akhir November atau awal Disember ini.

Katanya, keadaan itu juga mendedahkan remaja terbabit kepada risiko dijangkiti COVID-19 berbanding mereka yang sudah menerima dos lengkap.

"Keadaan ini juga memberi kesan kepada pembukaan semula sekolah dan juga pembukaan semula sektor ekonomi di seluruh negara."

"Justeru, ibu bapa dan penjaga disaran mematuhi janji temu dos kedua vaksin COVID-19 untuk anak remaja."

"Meskipun sektor ekonomi dan sosial sudah dibuka semula, dan keadaan semasa semakin bertambah baik, ibu bapa harus sedar bahawa risiko jangkitan COVID-19 masih tinggi lebih-lebih lagi bagi anak yang belum melengkapkan vaksinasi mereka," katanya dalam satu kenyataan.

Dr Noor Azmi memaklumkan, ibu bapa yang terpaksa menjadualkan semula janji temu dos kedua boleh menghubungi pihak

Keadaan itu juga dedahkan remaja terbabit kepada risiko dijangkiti COVID-19 berbanding mereka yang sudah menerima dos lengkap

Dr Noor Azmi Ghazali,
Timbalan Menteri Kesihatan



sekolah bagi mendapatkan janji temu baharu.

Katanya, ibu bapa yang tidak dapat hadir dimohon mewakili seorang individu dewasa bagi mengiringi anak untuk menerima suntikan vaksin dengan mengisi Surat Perwakilan Ibu bapa atau Penjaga, yang boleh didapati daripada sekolah anak masing-masing.

"Saya memahami ada dalam kalangan ibu bapa yang bimbang anak akan mendapat kesan sampingan seperti alahan."

"Bagaimanapun, ingin saya tekankan bahawa kesan sampi-

ngan yang serius amat jarang berlaku dan dengan rawatan awal, remaja akan pulih sepenuhnya," katanya.

Dr Noor Azmi berkata, setakat kelmarin, seramai 2,622,306 atau 83.3 peratus remaja sudah menerima dos pertama vaksin COVID-19 dan 2,197,961 atau 69.8 peratus menerima dos kedua.

Beliau berkata, negeri yang mencatatkan pencapaian dos kedua tertinggi adalah Melaka (88.6 peratus), Perlis (87.8 peratus), Pulau Pinang (83.7 peratus), Kedah (81 peratus) dan Terengganu (80.9 peratus).

BERNAMA

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 6
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Kes bertambah lagi cecah 5,713

Kuala Lumpur: Jumlah jangkitan baharu COVID-19 menunjukkan peningkatan apabila sebanyak 5,713 kes dilaporkan semalam berbanding 5,291 kes kelmarin.

Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah, berkata data terbaru itu menjadikan jumlah kumulatif kes di Malaysia setakat ini mencecah 2,492,343 jangkitan.

Menurut Dr Noor Hisham, daripada jumlah kes harian yang direkodkan semalam, sebanyak 93 kes atau 1.6 peratus adalah kategori 3, 4, dan 5, manakala 5,620 atau 98.4 peratus adalah kategori 1 dan 2.

"Bilangan pesakit yang menerima rawatan di unit rawatan rapi (ICU) kini seramai 555 orang iaitu 519 disahkan COVID-19, 36 pula disyaki, kemungkinan dan dalam siasatan.

"Daripada jumlah itu, 280 individu memerlukan alat bantuan pernafasan memabatkan 218 disahkan COVID-19, manakala 62 disyaki, kemungkinan dan dalam siasatan," katanya dalam kenyataan, semalam.

Selain itu, Dr Noor Hisham berkata, 5,865 kes sembuh direkodkan semalam menjadikan jumlah keseluruhan 2,396,244 kes iaitu 96.1 peratus daripada keseluruhan kes.

Beliau berkata, pihaknya turut mengenal pasti lima kluster baharu yang mana pertambahan kluster baharu itu menjadikan keseluruhan 5,793 kluster dilaporkan setakat ini, dengan 367 kluster masih aktif.

Katanya, maklumat terperinci akan dimuat naik ke laman web <http://covidnow.moh.gov.my> dengan data setiap hari dikemaskini selepas tengah malam.

Sementara itu, laman COVID-NOW memperincikan bahawa

sebanyak 22,409,335 atau 95.7 peratus kadar populasi dewasa di negara ini sudah lengkap dos vaksinasi COVID-19 setakat malam kelmarin.

Sejumlah 97.8 peratus atau 22,891,080 individu bagi populasi dewasa pula sudah menerima sekurang-kurangnya satu dos vaksin.

Sebanyak 114,573 dos suntikan vaksin diberikan kelmarin, memabatkan 42,306 suntikan dos lengkap dan 8,185 menerima suntikan dos pertama menjadikan jumlah kumulatif vaksin bagi Program Imunisasi COVID-19 Kebangsaan (PICK) kini meningkat kepada 50,420,916.

Setakat kelmarin juga, sebanyak 2,197,961 atau 69.8 peratus golongan remaja berusia 12 hingga 17 tahun lengkap vaksinasi, manakala 83.3 peratus atau 2,622,306 individu menerima sekurang-kurangnya satu dos vaksin.

Selain itu, sejumlah 64,082 dos penggalak vaksin COVID-19 diberikan kelmarin menjadikan jumlah kumulatif kini sebanyak 471,689.

Data terbaru itu menjadikan jumlah kumulatif kes di Malaysia setakat ini mencecah 2,492,343 jangkitan

Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah,
Ketua Pengarah
Kesihatan



AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO
 MUKA SURAT : 6
 RUANGAN : COVID-19

Bernama

Kuala Lumpur

Ibu bapa dan penjaga disarankan mematuhi janji temu dos kedua vaksin Covid-19 untuk anak remaja, kata Timbalan Menteri Kesihatan Datuk Dr Noor Azmi Ghazali.

Dr Noor Azmi yang juga merangkap Pengerusi Jawatankuasa Bertindak Imunitasi Covid-19 Remaja (CITF-A) dalam kenyataan semalam memaklumkan sejak seminggu lalu, Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) mendapati ada remaja tidak memenuhi atau menhadiri janji temu dos kedua seperti ditetapkan.

Katanya, mengikut unjuran kadar vaksinasi dos kedua bagi remaja sepatutnya mencapai 80 peratus pada 11 November ini, namun berdasarkan pemantauan unjuran janji temu dos kedua terkini, sasaran hanya tercapai pada akhir November atau awal Disember ini.

"Sekiranya ibu bapa atau penjaga tidak memastikan anak remaja mereka mene-

UNJURAN VAKSINASI REMAJA TERSASAR

Patuhi janji temu dos kedua

rima dos kedua, risiko untuk kumpulan remaja ini dijangkiti Covid-19 lebih tinggi berbanding mereka yang telah menerima dos lengkap.

"Situasi ini pasti memberi kesan kepada pembukaan semula sekolah dan pembukaan semula sektor ekonomi di seluruh negara," katanya.

Dr Noor Azmi memaklumkan ibu bapa yang menjadualkan semula janji temu dos kedua boleh menghubungi pihak sekolah bagi mendapatkan janji temu baharu.



DR Noor Azmi

Katanya, ibu bapa yang tidak dapat hadir dimohon mewakili seorang individu dewasa bagi mengiringi anak untuk menerima suntikan vaksin itu dengan mengisi Surat Perwakilan Ibu bapa atau Penjaga yang boleh didapati daripada sekolah anak masing-masing.

"Saya memahami ada dalam kalangan ibu bapa yang bimbang anak mendapat kesan sampingan seperti alahan. Namun ingin saya tekankan kesan sampingan serius amat jarang berlaku dan dengan rawatan awal, remaja pulih sepenuhnya.

"Meski-

pun sektor ekonomi dan sosial sudah dibuka semula dan keadaan semasa semakin bertambah baik, ibu bapa perlu sedar risiko jangkitan Covid-19 masih tinggi lebih-lebih lagi bagi anak yang belum melengkapkan vaksinasi mereka," katanya.

Menurut Dr Noor Azmi, sehingga 3 November, 2,622,306 atau 83.3 peratus remaja sudah menerima dos pertama vaksin Covid-19 dan 2,197,961 atau 69.8 peratus menerima dos kedua.

Beliau berkata negeri yang mencatatkan pencapaian dos kedua tertinggi iaitu Melaka (88.6 peratus), Perlis (87.8 peratus), Pulau Pinang (83.7 peratus), Kedah (81 peratus) dan Terengganu (80.9 peratus).

37 kompaun langgar SOP dikeluarkan JKNK

Kota Bharu: Jabatan Kesihatan Negeri Kelantan (JKNK) mengeluarkan 37 kompaun berjumlah RM56,000 dalam operasi bersepadu mematuhi prosedur operasi standard (SOP) Pelan Pemulihan Negara (PPN) Fasa 3, Ahad lalu.

Pengarah Kesihatan Negeri, Datuk Dr Zaini Hussin berkata, pemeriksaan dilakukan secara serentak membabitkan 175 premis di seluruh negeri.

"Daripada keseluruhan kompaun itu, 27 daripadanya dikeluarkan kepada individu didapati tidak mendaftar menerusi aplikasi MySejahtera atau menulis di dalam buku daftar untuk memasuki premis,

"Tujuh kompaun kepada individu tidak memakai pelitup muka dan masing-masing satu kompaun terhadap pemilik premis gagal menyediakan laluan keluar masuk, peralatan suhu tidak berfungsi dan tidak memastikan penjarakan," katanya.

Dr Zaini berkata, tindakan diambil mengikut Peraturan 16 Peraturan-Peraturan Pencegahan dan Pengawalan Penyakit Berjangkit (Langkah-langkah di dalam Kawasan Tempatan Jangkitan). (Pelan Pemulihan Negara) 2021.

"JKNK mohon kerjasama semua patuhi SOP oleh Majlis Keselamatan Negara (MKN) bagi mencegah penularan Covid-19," katanya.

AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO

MUKA SURAT : 7

RUANGAN : COVID-19

5,713 jangkitan baharu koronavirus

Kuala Lumpur: Jumlah kes baharu Covid-19 mencatatkan peningkatan dengan 5,713 kes dilaporkan semalam berbanding 5,291 kes kelmarin.

Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah berkata, data terbaharu itu menjadikan jumlah kumulatif kes di Malaysia setakat ini mencecah 2,492,343 kes.

Menurutnya, daripada jumlah kes harian direkodkan semalam, 93 kes atau 1.6 peratus adalah kategori 3, 4, dan 5 manakala 5,620 atau 98.4 peratus kategori 1 dan 2.

"Bilangan pesakit menerima rawatan di unit rawatan rapi (ICU) kini 555 iaitu 519 disahkan Covid-19, 36 pula disyaki, kemungkinan dan dalam siasatan.

"Daripada jumlah itu, 280 individu memerlukan alat bantuan pernafasan memabitkan 218 disahkan Covid-19 manakala 62 disyaki,

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Selain itu, Dr Noor Hisham berkata, 5,865 kes sembuh direkodkan semalam menjadikan jumlah keseluruhan 2,396,244 kes iaitu 96.1 peratus daripada keseluruhan kes.

Katanya, pihaknya turut mengenal pasti lima kluster baharu di mana pertambahan kluster baharu itu menjadikan keseluruhan 5,793 kluster sudah dilaporkan setakat ini; dengan 367 kluster masih aktif.

Katanya, maklumat terperinci akan dimuatnaik ke laman web <http://covid-now.moh.gov.my> dengan data setiap hari dikemaskini selepas tengah malam.

AKHBAR : KOSMO
 MUKA SURAT : 4
 RUANGAN : NEGARA



IBU bapa menemani anak masing-masing di ruang pemerhatian selepas menerima suntikan dos kedua vaksin Covid-19 di Hospital Pakar KPJ Tawakkal, Kuala Lumpur baru-baru ini.

Wakil kepada individu dewasa jika tidak dapat hadir

Ibu bapa perlu patuhi janji temu dos kedua

Oleh LUQMAN RIDHWAN
 MOHD. NOR

PUTRAJAYA — Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) menyarankan semua ibu bapa dan penjaga untuk mematuhi janji temu dos kedua anak remaja masing-masing supaya mereka dilindungi daripada jangkitan Covid-19.

Timbalan Menteri Kesihatan 1, Datuk Dr. Noor Azmi Ghazali berkata, bagi ibu bapa yang terpaksa menjadualkan janji temu dos kedua, mereka boleh menghubungi pihak sekolah supaya tarikh baharu dapat diberikan.

"Ibu bapa yang tidak dapat hadir dimohon mewakilkan seorang individu dewasa bagi mengiringi anak-anak untuk menerima vaksin Covid-19 dengan mengisi Surat Perwakilan Ibu bapa/Penjaga yang boleh didapati daripada sekolah anak

masing-masing," katanya dalam satu kenyataan semalam.

Menurutnya, sehingga 3 November lalu, seramai 2,622,306 iaitu 83.3 peratus remaja telah menerima dos pertama vaksin dan 2,197,961 (69.8 peratus) sudah disuntik dos kedua.

Ujarnya, negeri yang mempunyai pencapalan dos kedua tertinggi adalah Melaka iaitu 88.6 peratus, Perlis (87.8 peratus), Pulau Pinang (83.7 peratus), Kedah (81 peratus) dan Terengganu (80.9 peratus).

"Namun, sejak seminggu yang lalu, KKM mendapati terdapat remaja yang tidak memenuhi atau menghadiri janji temu kedua seperti ditetapkan.

"Mengikut unjuran, kadar vaksinasi dos kedua bagi remaja sepatutnya mencapai 80 peratus pada 11 November 2021," katanya yang merupakan Pengerusi Jawa-

tankuasa Bertindak Imunisasi Covid-19 Remaja (CITF-A).

Ujarnya, berdasarkan pementauan unjuran janji temu dos kedua terkini, sasaran tersebut hanya akan tercapai pada akhir bulan ini atau awal Disember.

"Sekiranya ibu bapa atau penjaga tidak memastikan anak remaja mereka menerima dos kedua, risiko untuk kumpulan remaja ini dijangkiti Covid-19 adalah lebih tinggi berbanding mereka yang telah menerima dos lengkap.

"Situasi ini pastinya akan memberi kesan kepada pembukaan sekolah dan juga pembukaan sektor ekonomi di seluruh negara," katanya.

Katanya, beliau menekankan bahawa kesan sampingan yang serius adalah amat jarang berlaku dan dengan rawatan awal, remaja akan pulih sepenuhnya.

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES

MUKA SURAT : 4

RUANGAN : NEWS / NATION

INFECTION RISK

'SOME TEENS SKIPPING SECOND JAB'

Deputy minister reminds parents to ensure that their children meet their appointments

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SEVERAL teenagers have not turned up for the second dose of Covid-19 vaccination for the past week, the Health Ministry revealed yesterday.

It was believed that they had either skipped or missed their appointment dates.

Deputy Health Minister Datuk Dr Noor Azmi Ghazali said the vaccination for the group should reach 80 per cent by Nov 11.

However, according to the latest projection, the vaccination of teenagers would only reach 80 per cent by the end of this month or early next month, he said.

"The (infection) risk is high for the group who have not completed their vaccination. This would affect the reopening of schools and also the reopening of the economic sector in the country," he said yesterday.

He reminded parents to ensure that their children fulfilled the appointments given to them.

Dr Noor Azmi also said side effects from the vaccination was rare and early treatment would aid in recovery.

As of Nov 3, 83.3 per cent (2,622,306) teenagers had received one dose of the Covid-19 vaccine, while 69.8 per cent



A health worker showing a syringe filled with a Covid-19 vaccine to a teenage recipient in Bandar Perda, Seberang Jaya, Penang, recently. (Inset) Datuk Dr Noor Azmi Ghazali. PIC BY DANIAL SAAD



(2,197,961) received both doses.

States with the high vaccination rates were Melaka (88.6 per cent), Perlis (87.8 per cent), Penang (83.7 per cent), Kedah (81 per cent) and Terengganu (80.9 per cent).

Based on CovidNow and GitHub data, up to Nov 3, 75.3 per cent of the country's total population had been fully vaccinated while 78.1 per cent received at least one dose.

There were 24,607,296 fully vaccinated individuals, 906,090 partially vaccinated while 7,339,301 were unvaccinated.

By Feb 23 next year, 80 per cent or 26,125,920 of Malaysians were expected to be fully vaccinated.

In terms of age group, 95.7 per cent of the adult population and

69.8 per cent of adolescents have been fully vaccinated.

On the number of fatalities, the country recorded 46 deaths on Wednesday, bringing the national death toll to 29,045. Of the figure, eight were brought-in-dead cases.

Majority of the deaths were reported in Sarawak at 10, followed by Kelantan (nine), Johor (eight), Sabah (four), Kedah and Perlis (three each), Melaka and Penang (two each), while Negri Sembilan, Perak, Selangor, Kuala Lumpur and Terengganu recorded one

death each.

In the past two weeks, 19 deaths were reported per one million people in Malaysia, with Sarawak having the highest fatalities among the states at 49 per one million people.

On daily infections, the country recorded 5,713 new cases yesterday, which was an increase from the 5,291 on Wednesday.

Health director-general Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah, in a tweet, said this brought the national tally to 2,492,343 cases.

The country recorded 5,071 Covid-19 infections on Tuesday, 4,626 on Monday and 4,979 on Sunday.

On the Covid-19 R-naught (Rt), the figure slightly dipped to 0.94 from 0.95 up to Wednesday.

States and federal territories with Rt 1.0 and over were Putrajaya (1.07), Negri Sembilan (1.02), Perlis, Melaka and Kuala Lumpur (1.01), and Selangor (1.0).

Other states recorded Rt between 0.99 and 0.85, while Labuan had six cases with zero Rt.

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 6
RUANGAN : NATION

Neither prevention nor cure

MOH: Ivermectin not effective for severe cases of Covid-19

By ALLISON LAI
allison@thestar.com.my

PETALING JAYA: A clinical study conducted locally concluded that the anti-viral drug Ivermectin cannot be used in current Covid-19 treatment as it does not prevent severe cases of Covid-19, says the Health Ministry.

The I-Tech study by the Institute of Clinical Research (ICR) revealed that those who had Ivermectin, experienced three times more adverse events with the most common adverse effect being diarrhoea, said Health director-general Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah.

In a statement on Wednesday, he said the study was conducted on 500 patients who had been hospitalised for Covid-19 in Stages Two or Three.

"The I-Tech study was to see if Ivermectin administered during the first week of illness prevented deterioration to severe Covid-19 Stage Four or Five among hospitalised patients aged 50 years and above with at least one comorbidity.

"They were randomly assigned to two groups, namely those who had five-day Ivermectin treatment (0.4mg/kg/day) with standard care and those who had only standard care," he said.

Dr Noor Hisham added that the data showed no difference in the rate of progression to the severe stages.

According to the principal investigator of the I-Tech study, Dr Steven Lim Chee Loon who is an infectious disease specialist at Hospital Raja Permaisuri Bainun, Ipoh in Perak, there were no significant differences found in terms of ICU admission, mechanical ventilation, symptom recovery, blood parameters and chest x-ray resolution for those who were administered Ivermectin.

"Based on the outcomes of the I-Tech study, Ivermectin cannot be recommended for inclusion in cur-

rent Covid-19 treatment guidelines as Ivermectin does not reduce the risk of severe illness from Covid-19," said Dr Noor Hisham.

"The Health Ministry continues with prior advice that Ivermectin only be used within clinical trials settings with monitoring.

"Until further supportive evidence becomes available, practitioners are cautioned not to recommend Ivermectin, including sharing illegal advertising or sale of Ivermectin for treatment of Covid-19," he added.

Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin also highlighted the results of the study in a tweet.

'Ensure teens keep to second dose appointments'

KUALA LUMPUR: Parents and guardians are advised to keep to their teenagers' Covid-19 vaccine second dose appointments, says Datuk Dr Noor Azmi Ghazali.

The Covid-19 Immunisation Task Force-Adolescent (CITF-A) chairman said the Health Ministry, in the past week, found that there were teenagers who failed to turn up for their second dose appointments.

Dr Noor Azmi said according to earlier projections, the second dose rate should have reached 80% by Nov 11 but based on the latest projections, this target would only be achieved by late November or early December.

"If parents or guardians do not ensure that their teenagers receive the second dose, the risk for this group getting infected with Covid-19 is higher than those who have been fully vaccinated.

"This situation will definitely affect the reopening of schools and also the reopening of economic sectors," he said in a statement.

Dr Noor Azmi said parents who had to reschedule the second dose appointment could contact the school for a new one, reported Bernama.

"Those unable to accompany their children for their vaccination appointments, can request for another adult to represent them by filling up a form available at the school," he said.

"I also understand concerns among parents of their children having side effects such as allergies.

"However, I would like to stress here that serious side effects are rare and with early treatment, they will fully recover.

"Although sectors have reopened and the current situation is improving, parents should be aware that the risk of infections is still high."

Public warned against using anti-viral drug

PETALING JAYA: Medical practitioners and members of the public have been warned against using Ivermectin to treat Covid-19 following a clinical study that confirmed its ineffectiveness against the illness.

Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) president Dr Koh Kar Chai said that any attempt to buy Ivermectin over the counter for use in treating Covid-19 would be contravening the law.

"Doctors who wish to use this drug will have to make an application for use in clinical trials," he said yesterday.

According to Dr Koh, Ivermectin is a drug that is available in Malaysia for specific indications, which do not include being a therapeutic agent in the treatment of Covid-19.

According to a clinical study by the Institute of Clinical Research, Ivermectin does not prevent severe cases of Covid-19.

As such, the Health Ministry announced on Wednesday that Ivermectin cannot be recommended for inclusion in current Covid-19

treatment guidelines.

The ministry said anti-viral drug Ivermectin could only be used within clinical trial settings with monitoring until further supportive evidence becomes available. Medical practitioners have been cautioned not to recommend its use for Covid-19 treatment.

Dr Koh said that prior to this, proponents of Ivermectin had hopes that the anti-viral drug would be effective against Covid-19.

But the clinical study had proven that this was not the case, he said.

"So there will be no attempt by the government to get the drug to be approved for use in Covid-19 unless there is new data supporting its use," he added.

Malaysian Public Health Physicians Association president Datuk Dr Zainal Ariffin Omar said that in general, there was no concrete evidence to prove Ivermectin's effectiveness against Covid-19 when compared to the standard treatment.

Although it is not recommended for inclusion in the clinical guide-

lines of Covid-19 treatment, he said the drug should continue to be used for study purposes with proper approvals.

"It should not be used for prescription or general usage, except as described in the approved label, like for animal diseases and certain anti-parasite treatments," he said, adding that the people should wait for another bigger study involving Ivermectin.

Dr Zainal Ariffin said more details of the clinical results and methodology in the clinical study should be made available.

"In standard evidence-based medicine, we have to go through a rigorous process of technical evaluation and peer-reviewed publication before being accepted for meta-analysis," he said.

Ivermectin has been used for decades to treat head lice and river blindness in humans, and heartworms in animals. Various manufacturers still carry warnings of its side effects on its packaging.

Independent health policy specialist Dr Khor Swee Kheng said

Ivermectin has "no effect" on Covid-19 other than causing diarrhoea.

Ivermectin, he said, is good for treating river blindness which affects 1.2 million blind people in tropical countries; filariasis which is an infectious tropical disease caused by parasitic roundworms, and hookworm infections that are common in areas with poor access to adequate water and sanitation, which affects 600 million people worldwide.

Malaysian Pharmacists Society president Amrahi Buang said the clinical study findings were consistent with that of similar trials in Brazil and Argentina.

"Finally, our studies show that Ivermectin is not recommended for treatment of Covid-19. Those who have been claiming otherwise should accept this.

"We hope people will stop using Ivermectin for Covid-19 immediately," he said.

Amrahi noted that more in-depth studies on Ivermectin are welcome, provided that proper protocols are followed.

More info and vaccine awareness vital, says counsellor

By VENESA DEVI
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JOHOR BARU: Those choosing not to take the Covid-19 vaccine should be prepared to forgo "privileges" that are given to those who are fully vaccinated.

Universiti Teknologi Malaysia counselling centre director Dr Zulfikar Ahmad said that while the public should be allowed to make their own decision on whether to be vaccinated, they should also be held accountable for the decision they made.

"Once you have chosen not to take the vaccine, you should be accountable and be prepared for the consequences that come along with that decision, including forgoing certain privileges such as being able to dine in at eateries, visit certain places and travel across state borders.

"The government and authorities cannot punish or force them into taking the vaccine. That is not the right and effective approach to take,

95.7% of adults vaxxed

KUALA LUMPUR: A total of 22,409,335 people or 95.7% of the adult population have completed their Covid-19 vaccination.

According to the Health Ministry's data on the CovidNow portal, 97.8% of the adult population or 22,891,080 people have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

A total of 114,573 doses of the vaccine were dispensed on Wednesday with 42,306 recipients receiving the vaccine as their second dose, 8,485 as their first dose and 64,082 as

booster doses.

This brings the total number of doses administered under the National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme that was launched last Feb 24 to 50,420,916.

As for teenagers, aged 12 to 17, a total of 2,197,961 or 69.8% have completed the vaccination while 83.3% or 2,622,306 have received at least the first dose of the vaccine.

On the administration of the booster dose, a total of 471,689 doses had been dispensed as of Wednesday. — Bernama

but we should make them think on their own," he told *The Star*.

Instead of confronting the group and pushing them to change their minds, he said the more meaningful approach was to educate and provide them with sufficient information in order for them to make their

own decisions.

"When people have set their mind on something, it is not easy to make them change it, especially if they feel like they are being forced into it. They will be defensive and once it comes to a point, they may become emotional.

"Which is why, in counselling, we will not tell people to change their minds. We may give them our opinions but most importantly, give them information," he said.

Zulfikar noted that many who previously hesitated to take the vaccine had decided to take it, and this was testament that people could indeed have a change of opinion, especially after they see things happening in front of their own eyes.

"As humans, we are not easily convinced with words but we need proof and data. When they see more people taking the vaccines, including those from other parts of the world, they are slowly convinced," he said.

He also cautioned against the use of the term "anti-vaccine" or "anti-vax" to label groups who have yet to take the vaccine.

"Using such labels will only make them feel discriminated upon. We have to also remember that there are those who have medical conditions and others who are still sitting on the fence," said Zulfikar.

On the other hand, the government must also be firm and make it clear that those who had decided not to take it would lose out on certain privileges, he said.

"Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin's statement to the group a couple of weeks ago, telling them 'life will be difficult for them' is a strong and necessary message.

"As a minister, he needs to be firm. Sure, we cannot force or punish them but they should also remember that life will not be easy for them," Zulfikar added.

Last month, Khairy issued a warning, saying that while the government would not likely issue a federal mandate to make vaccination compulsory, it would not make it any easier for vaccine deniers.

"Sorry to say, we will continue to make life very difficult for you if you are not vaccinated because you choose not to.

"If you cannot be vaccinated on health grounds, we will give (digital) exemption through MySejahtera," he said.

AKHBAR : THE STAR
 MUKA SURAT : 16
 RUANGAN : VIEWS

Buy only approved, certified self-test kits

I READ with interest the recent announcement by Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Alexander Nanta Linggi on the proposed move to make Covid-19 self-test kits available at supermarkets, convenience stores, and petrol stations.

At first impression, this might seem to be a practical move, as it would make it more convenient for consumers to get the self-test kits. While I understand that low prices and easy access will benefit consumers, we nevertheless cannot simply opt for convenience at the expense of safety or quality.

What I mean by this is self-test kits are currently available at pharmacies, which already exist in every township, suburb and residential area.

When we purchase self-test kits from pharmacies, we can be assured that they are approved and certified by the Medical Device Authority (MDA) under the Health Ministry.

But when you allow various other outlets to sell them, I believe that somewhere along the line, there will be counterfeits or kits that are not approved by the relevant authorities.

When the Covid-19 pandemic first broke out, the demand for face



masks shot up drastically. There was a shortage at first, but when they became readily available, a lot of enterprising people began to sell masks. Some of the face masks do not meet the required medical standards and cannot fulfil their purpose of preventing infections.

There were even reports that used masks were being recycled to produce new ones! By this analogy, if self-test kits are made available easily at multiple outlets, issues of counterfeit or unapproved kits may also arise. Even now, we are hearing that some self-test kits sold online seem to be producing inac-

curate results.

As long as Covid-19 remains in our midst, this may lead to the possibility of a black market with no proper quality control. We know how creative and resourceful Malaysians can be, hence we do not want something as important as these self-test kits to be the object of such scams.

As a father of two, I am more confident buying self-test kits from a pharmacist or a proper health-care provider, as I know they would have been verified and approved by the MDA.

Covid-19 self-test kits are cur-

rently available at pharmacies, and I truly believe this should be maintained.

Recently, I read that in countries such as the United Kingdom and India, self-test kits are only available at pharmacies and other certified bodies.

The way I see it, our government needs to put the safety of the rakyat above everything else.

I'm also wondering why the announcement to expand the sale of self-test kits to supermarkets, convenience stores and petrol stations was made by the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister and not the Health Minister.

Shouldn't the matter of health-care be under the Health Ministry, especially when its minister, Khairy Jamaluddin, had announced last month that pharmacies are the best places to buy Covid-19 self-test kits?

This contradiction between the two ministries shows there is lack of communication and understanding between them, and this could create problems that could put the safety of the public at risk.

ADAM MALEK
 Kuala Lumpur

AKHBAR : THE SUN ON FRIDAY

MUKA SURAT : 3

RUANGAN : NEWS WITHOUT BORDERS

Delicious tasting health risk

► Experts advise moderation in consumption of food containing acrylamide, that is linked to cancer

■ BY ELWIN DAVA
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PETALING JAYA: Almost everyone believes that consuming too much fried food could raise cholesterol levels.

It turns out that everything that emerges from the frying pan may cause other health problems too, such as cancer.

The culprit here is acrylamide, an organic compound that is used to make paper, dyes and plastic.

It is also used in the treatment of sewage and waste water.

Acrylamide is not added to food, but the colourless and odourless substance is formed in the cooking process, especially when food that contains the amino acid asparagine is fried or baked at high heat.

Among the many types of food rich in asparagine are beef, poultry meat, eggs, potatoes and legumes.

According to Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman assistant professor

of chemical science Dr Anto Cordelia Dhanapal, acrylamide can cause skin and eye irritation as well as discharge and inflammation of the nose and throat, leading to coughing and wheezing.

"High exposure can also lead to confusion, disorientation, fatigue and tremors. Apart from that, it is probably also a carcinogen," she told *theSun*.

Anto Cordelia said laboratory tests on rats showed that it causes cancers in the central nervous system, mammary glands and the scrotum of the rodents, but only involving high doses.

The environmental protection agencies of Malaysia and the United States as well as the International Agency for Research on Cancer considers acrylamide a potential carcinogen.

Last week, Health Director-General Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said several varieties of biscuits on the market have been

found to contain acrylamide.

However, Anto Cordelia said low levels of acrylamide is safe. For a person who weighs 70kg, any amount below 182 micrograms per day is considered tolerable (182 micrograms is less than 1,000th of a teaspoon).

Foods that are fried, boiled or baked contain more acrylamide, especially when it has been cooked for a longer duration.

Evidence of the carcinogen in the food is quite discernible. Potato fries cooked to a dark brown shade or similarly coloured toasted bread produce more acrylamide than light coloured cooked foods.

That puts items such as biscuits, cakes, pastries, hash browns, potato chips, crackers, breakfast cereals, canned black olives, prune juice and coffee on the blacklist.

However, there are ways to stem the production of acrylamide. Soaking potatoes in water for 15 to 30 minutes before frying or roasting will do the trick, Anto Cordelia said.

Reducing cooking time also helps.

However, storing potatoes in the fridge will lead to more acrylamide being formed during cooking.

In the case of coffee, the acrylamide is formed when the

beans are roasted, not when it is brewed.

Dietician and nutritionist Adele Wong Li-Peng said barbecuing, grilling, frying or smoking fish as well as meats such as pork, beef and chicken also raises the chance of various types of carcinogens forming.

However, Wong said all the information have been derived only from research on animals, and the doses of acrylamide ingested by the lab rats were "a lot higher than what a normal person would consume".

To be on the safe side, remove the charred or burnt portions of the meat before eating, she added.

Beyond the concerns about acrylamide, Wong said people should also watch what they eat.

"Don't eat too much ultra-processed foods such as chips, cookies and candy. They are super-palatable and good for the soul, but not that great for physical health."

She said the general rule is to consume whole foods that have undergone minimal processing.

"Occasionally, it is alright to sprinkle in some fun food. There is no such thing as 'good' or 'bad' food. Anything can become bad if consumed too much. Moderation is key," she added.