

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 4
RUANGAN : NATION

More seeking mental health help is a positive shift, say experts

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PETALING JAYA: The growing number of Malaysians seeking help for mental health issues should not be viewed negatively, say mental health experts.

In fact, this shows that Malaysians are more open to getting help and it can be viewed as a positive step towards the destigmatisation of mental health issues, said psychologist Assoc Prof Dr Anasuya Jegathevi Jegathesan.

She said things such as fear of the unknown contributed significantly to depression and anxiety among Malaysians.

"At the same time, the surge in online scams has further eroded trust, increasing anxiety levels among Malaysians.

"The ripple effects of these scams extend beyond direct victims, as the pervasive sense of an unsafe environment fuels

broader mental health challenges," the University of Cyberjaya's Psychology and Social Sciences Faculty dean said.

Dr Anasuya said an early sign of mental health issues is the drastic change in a person's behaviour.

"This change in behaviour can last for days and people are unable to function due to this. This is when you know you should be seeking professional help," she said.

In the complex landscape of mental health, the biopsychosocial model provides a comprehensive framework to understand the onset of disorders like depression and anxiety, said UCSI University's head of programme for psychology, Arman Imran Ashok.

He said the model considers the interplay of biological, psychological and social factors, each contributing to an individual's mental health in distinct ways.

"Biologically, individuals may have a genetic predisposition to anxiety and depression. This genetic legacy can make them more susceptible to these conditions, especially if there is a family history of mental health issues.

"The biological component highlights the importance of understanding family medical history when assessing mental health risks," the clinical psychologist said.

Arman added that psychologically, how an individual perceives and reacts to the environment can significantly influence their mental health, such as using anger to mask their depression.

He said social upbringing plays a crucial role, such as when children raised in high-pressure environments with expectations of perfection may develop a worldview where failure is unacceptable.

"This mindset can lead to

increased stress and anxiety in various life situations, such as workplace challenges or personal relationships," he added.

Another issue that could lead to mental health issues is environmental stressors, which can come from workplace dynamics, family issues and living conditions.

"Workplace politics and home life stress, including extended family conflicts or caring for a child with special needs, can significantly impact mental health," he said.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said 223,773 self-assessments had been conducted via the MyMinda platform since its launch on Oct 10, 2023 to Jan 23 this year.

Meanwhile, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Federal Territories) Dr Zaliha Mustafa said a total of 44,901 civil servants are at "high risk" of mental health issues, including depres-

sion, anxiety, substance abuse and suicidal behaviour, based on the findings of the Public Service Psychological Health Digital Profiling System (MyPsyD).

On Feb 26, Dzulkefly said 39.5% of respondents of the MyMinda mental health screenings are at risk of experiencing depression.

While the figures show that Malaysians are willing to seek assistance through the Health Ministry's Talian Heal 15555 helpline or to share more about their mental health, Arman said there is still a long way to go in addressing mental health issues as a whole.

He said individuals must treat the issues by seeking further treatment with healthcare professionals to ensure they are properly diagnosed.

"Treat it like going to the dentist - you do not wait until your tooth is aching. We don't wait until there is a huge problem," he said.

AKHBAR : UTUSAN MALAYSIA

MUKA SURAT : 7

RUANGAN : DALAM NEGERI

utusan m/sia w/s 7 Selasa 18/3/25 Dlm Negeri.

Gangguan ePlacement, penempatan 2,245 pegawai ditangguh

PUTRAJAYA: Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) menangguhkan pemilihan penempatan 2,245 calon pegawai perubatan lantikan tetap yang sepatutnya berlangsung semalam akibat gangguan teknikal serius dalam sistem ePlacement. Gangguan itu berpunca daripada akses luar biasa yang menyebabkan sistem tidak dapat berfungsi dengan baik.

Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Dr. Muhammad Radzi Abu Hassan berkata, pada 27 Februari lalu, terdapat lebih 19 juta akses ke sistem, termasuk melalui kaedah yang tidak sepatutnya.

Akibatnya, pangkalan data sistem tidak dapat dicapai, sekali gus menjejaskan keseluruhan proses pemilihan penempatan.

“Gangguan tersebut menyebabkan ketidakseimbangan dalam penempatan pegawai perubatan, di mana

kurang daripada satu peratus kekosongan di Sabah dan Sarawak dipenuhi.

“Oleh itu, KKM mengambil keputusan untuk menambah baik sistem dan infrastruktur sebelum membuka semula permohonan,” katanya.

Sebagai langkah penyelesaian, KKM akan menggantikan kaedah *first come first serve* kepada sistem pemilihan baharu yang lebih telus, adil dan berasaskan merit.

Sistem ini juga akan memastikan keseimbangan antara penawaran dan permintaan pegawai perubatan di seluruh negara.

KKM menjangka sistem pemilihan baharu akan dibuka dalam tempoh enam hingga lapan minggu lagi setelah diuji bagi memastikan kemampuannya.

Sesi libat urus akan diadakan bagi menerangkan perubahan sistem kepada pegawai perubatan yang terlibat.

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN

MUKA SURAT : 7

RUANGAN : NATION



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MOH: We'll use fairer merit-based system

Health DG pledges change to posting of officers

PUTRAJAYA: The existing ePlacement selection system, which uses the first come, first served approach, will be replaced with a more transparent, fairer and merit-based system that meets supply and demand considerations.

Health director-general Datuk Dr Muhammad Radzi Abu Hassan said new application dates for the ePlacement system scheduled for March 25, 26 and 27 are cancelled and postponed to a new date to be announced later.

He said the Health Ministry (MOH) is expected to reopen applications within six to eight weeks from yesterday after the new system is finalised and its sustainability is tested before being implemented.

"In line with this, we have discussed, not only for the current cohort, but we will also take into account the next batch, which should be in May (self-reporting), we will also move it so that it is fairer," he told a special press

conference here yesterday.

He said that although transparency and fairness have improved, the importance of services received will also be of the highest priority because the actual objective of ePlacement is to fill the necessary vacancies in delivering services to the people.

"The MOH will hold engagement sessions with medical officers involved to explain in more detail about the ePlacement system.

"Most importantly, we will ensure that services are not affected. So, for now, they will work wherever they are," he said.

Dr Muhammad Radzi said that through the ePlacement 2.0 system, the MOH will also consider the welfare issues of applicants before approving an application, Bernama reported.

"What I am trying to emphasise is that this placement is based on vacancies and existing posts. Currently, Sabah and Sarawak have the most number of vacancies at over 50%.

"So, we have to see how we can ensure that placements can also be done without filling the quota there," he said.

He said the MOH will continue to provide new information and updates regarding the ePlacement 2.0 system, including guidelines and vacancy data from time to time.

"The MOH urges all medical officers to use this system ethically and responsibly to avoid any disruptions that could affect the transparency of the selection process," he said.

Commenting on the incident that occurred on Feb 27, which resulted in the MOH cancelling the placement selection of 2,245 medical officers, Dr Muhammad Radzi said this was due to a serious technical disruption caused by unusual access to the ePlacement system.

According to him, the full access report on that day showed that the ePlacement system received more than 19 million hits, resulting in the system database being



On the case: Dr Muhammad Radzi (centre) speaking during the press conference in Putrajaya. — Bernama

inaccessible.

"This was one of the main factors that contributed to the postponement of this placement selection.

"Based on the network traffic log on Feb 27, the MOH found that many users had accessed the server through various devices, including using inappropriate methods," he said.

As a result of this technical disruption, he said application statistics also showed that more placements were approved compared to the original quota.

He said that 50% of the existing vacancies were in Sabah and

Sarawak, but based on the receipt of applications on Feb 27, less than 1% of vacancies in Sabah and Sarawak were filled.

This resulted in the data obtained being unusable, he said. However, Muhammad Radzi stressed that the technical disruption had nothing to do with cyber-security incidents.

"The National Digital Department and the National Cyber Security Agency were involved and it was found that no intrusion or cyber security incident had occurred and the matter had been reported to CyberSecurity Malaysia," he said.