

Health Ministry to roll out new generation drug to treat diabetes, obesity

THE Health Ministry (MOH) will roll out a new generation drug to support diabetes and obesity patients among vulnerable groups under Budget 2026, as part of efforts to enhance treatment for non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said the move comes after continuous evaluations of the MOH Medicines Formulary, which is regularly updated by a panel of experts to ensure that all medicines are safe, effective and cost-efficient.

"In the budget, we are also introducing new treatments such as GLP-1, which have been proven effective in helping patients manage diabetes and lose weight. These treatments will be prioritised for vulnerable groups facing health challenges related to diabetes and obesity," he said during a recent question-and-answer session in the Dewan Rakyat.

He was responding to a supplementary question from Datuk Adnan Abu Hassan (Kuala Pilah-BN) on the ministry's efforts to review the

National Formulary, ensuring that essential medicines for chronic diseases such as diabetes are subsidised, thus making quality treatment accessible to all, regardless of financial means.

Dzulkefly stated that generic medicines approved by the ministry are on par in terms of efficacy and safety, having undergone rigorous bioequivalence testing and pharmacoeconomic assessments.

In response to Adnan's original question regarding the ministry's initiatives to reduce the

burden of NCDs through an integrated approach, he said that over 1.36 million adults aged 18 and above nationwide have undergone health screenings under the National Health Screening Initiative and the PeKa B40 Health Care Scheme as of September, as an early detection measure for NCDs.

Dzulkefly said the MOH is also enhancing primary care services, including virtual consultations, with 163,975 sessions recorded as of July. – Bernama

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TIDAK BERDAFTAR DENGAN KKM

HM 3/11/2025 ms/8

Klang

Sebanyak 402 jenis ubat tidak berdaftar termasuk ubat-ubatan keluaran luar negara bernilai lebih RM6 juta dirampas dalam serbuan di sekitar Klang.

Serbuan dijalankan jam 11 pagi, 23 Oktober lalu oleh Jabatan Kesihatan Negeri Selangor (JKNS) melalui Cawangan Penguatkuasaan Farmasi (CPF JKNS) dengan kerjasama Bahagian Keselamatan dan Kualiti Makanan serta Bahagian Penguatkuasaan Farmasi Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM).

JKNS berkata, pihaknya menjalankan tindakan penguatkuasaan terhadap sindiket penjualan dan pengedaran ubat tidak berdaftar dengan Pihak Berkuasa Kawalan Dadah, KKM.

Menurutnya, operasi turut dibantu Cawangan Penguatkuasaan Farmasi dari Pahang, Negeri Sembilan dan Kuala Lumpur.

"CPF JKNS menjalankan pemeriksaan terhadap dua premis stor haram dijadikan lokasi penyimpanan ubat tidak berdaftar dan empat premis penjualan dikaitkan dengan suspek.

"Pemeriksaan berjaya merampas 402 jenis ubat tidak berdaftar termasuk ubat-ubatan keluaran luar negara dengan nilai rampasan melebihi RM6 juta.

"Ubat-ubatan yang tidak berdaftar dari luar negara dipercayai diperoleh dari

402 jenis ubat RM6j dirampas



JKNS melalui CPF JKNS dengan kerjasama Bahagian Keselamatan dan Kualiti Makanan serta Bahagian Penguatkuasaan Farmasi KKM menyerbu dua stor haram dan empat premis jualan di Klang.

pembekal tidak sah untuk dijual di pasaran tempatan.

"Antara ubat tidak berdaftar dirampas adalah ubat mengandungi racun berjadual seperti bahan perangsang seks (Sildenafil),

antibiotik (Tetracycline dan Amoxicilin), steroid (Dexamethasone), pil kontraseptif (Ethinylestradiol/Levonorgestrel) dan antihistamine (Chlorpheniramine)," katanya dalam satu kenyataan, semalam.

Katanya, penjualan dan pemilikan ubat tidak berdaftar adalah melanggar Peraturan 7(1)(a), Peraturan-Peraturan Kawalan Dadah dan Kosmetik 1984, yang boleh dihukum mengikut Seksyen 12, Akta Jualan Dadah 1952.

"Jika sabit kesalahan, individu boleh dikenakan hukuman denda sehingga RM25,000 atau penjara tidak melebihi tiga tahun manakala bagi syarikat, denda boleh dikenakan sehingga RM50,000.

"Tindakan ini sebahagian usaha berterusan CPF JKNS membanteras penjualan dan pengedaran ubat tidak berdaftar di pasaran bagi memastikan keselamatan orang awam terjamin," katanya.

Menurut JKNS, orang ramai dinasihatkan supaya menyemak status pendaftaran ubat dengan merujuk kepada pelekat keselamatan hologram dan nombor pendaftaran ubat (MAL) sebelum membeli ubat berkenaan.

"Status pendaftaran ubat boleh disemak dengan melayari laman sesawang <http://www.npra.gov.my> di ruangan *Product Search* atau menghubungi Bahagian Regulatori Farmasi Negara (NPRA) di talian 03-78835400," katanya.

12,500 murid di Selangor bakal terima vaksin Influenza

Shah Alam: Seramai 12,500 murid daripada keluarga berpendapatan rendah (B40) di Selangor bakal menerima vaksin influenza secara percuma bermula minggu depan.

EXCO Kesihatan Awam dan Alam Sekitar Selangor, Jamaliah Jamaluddin, berkata program pemberian vaksin itu akan dilaksanakan di empat daerah yang mencatatkan kadar kes tertinggi di negeri ini, iaitu Petaling, Klang, Gombak dan Hulu Langat menanggung peruntukan RM1 juta.

Katanya, ia memastikan kanak-kanak, khususnya golongan berpendapatan rendah mendapat perlindungan terhadapjangkitan influenza serta mengurangkan penularan dalam komuniti.

"Jabatan Kesihatan Negeri Selangor (JKNS) menyarankan murid berusia lapan tahun dan ke bawah menerima dua dos vaksin influenza, kecuali bagi mereka yang sudah menerima vaksin sama sebelum ini.

"Langkah ini penting memastikan perlindungan imunisasi lebih optimum terhadapjangkitan dalam kalangan kanak-kanak berisiko tinggi," katanya dalam kenyataan, semalam.

Beliau berkata, program itu akan dilaksanakan melalui dua kaedah iaitu Program Outreach di sekolah dengan Pusat Pendidikan Khas Integrasi (PPKI) yang mana pasukan akan digerakkan ke sekolah yang mempunyai PPKI bagi memberi vaksin influenza kepada kira-kira 4,720 murid berusia 8 tahun ke bawah daripada golongan B40.

Katanya, setiap murid akan menerima risalah maklumat lengkap mengenai program ini berserta kod QR untuk ibu bapa mendaftar melalui aplikasi SELangkah.

"Kaedah kedua adalah secara 'walk in' di klinik Selcare dan klinik panel terpilih yang mana kanak-kanak daripada keluarga B40 dan mempunyai komorbid atau penyakit kronik, tetapi tidak berada di sekolah dengan PPKI, boleh mendapatkan vaksin terpilih.

"Ibu bapa perlu mendaftar dan mengesahkan status melalui aplikasi SELangkah sebelum hadir ke klinik," katanya.



Jamaliah
Jamaluddin

Autistic adults push back on 'fear-based' Trump rhetoric



Being neurodivergent is challenging, but such individuals still deserve to be treated as a human. PICTURE CREDIT: PRESSPHOTO - FREEPR



Autism spectrum disorder is a broad neurodevelopmental diagnosis that encompasses challenges related to social skills, communication and behaviour. PICTURE CREDIT: MACREVECTOR - FREEPR

COMPOSER William Barnett started his YouTube channel as an outlet for his music, but today he also uses it to debunk the steady stream of White House rhetoric on autism while sharing his own experience living with it.

United States President Donald Trump and his health secretary, anti-vaccine advocate Robert F. Kennedy Jr, have made autism their talking point, calling it a "horror show" and "a crisis" while making unproven claims that it's caused by vaccines or acetaminophen.

"I just wonder if he sees us all as poems," the 29-year-old said from his apartment in Queens, New York.

Barnett, in a view that mirrors the medical community at large, sees the White House language as misinformation that only serves to drum up fear among parents and stigmatise people like him.

"It's caused a lot of autistic people to believe that there's something wrong with them and that they don't really have a place in our society," Barnett said.

Autism spectrum disorder is a broad neurodevelopmental diagnosis that encompasses challenges related to social skills, communication and behaviour.

Traits vary widely, as does the degree to which one's life is impacted. There is no known cause.

A combination of genetic and environmental factors is likely involved, according to the World Health Organisation.

The US Centers for Disease Con-

trol and Prevention reported that one in 31 children were found to have autism in 2022, an increase that's largely attributed to improved, broadened diagnosis methods along with growing awareness.

TREATED AS A HUMAN

Barnett received multiple diagnoses related to autism, beginning at age 3.

Growing up in Los Angeles, "I just wanted to be normal", he said.

"I just kept thinking about what my life would look like if I was neurotypical."

The composer doesn't feel that way today. He has a Master of Fine Arts in musical theatre from New York University and has found that by embracing his diagnosis, his life has only grown richer.

Barnett said he has found "a second home" through the organisation Autistic Adults NYC, an autistic-run nonprofit.

Autistic Adults NYC member Sebastian Barriosauto, 26, said the discourse in Washington made him feel "frustrated" and "angry".

"I feel like we are treated as we're nothing in society," he said.

But people on the spectrum "think outside the box", he said, and "can contribute in so many different ways than other people would".

Members interviewed all said if the White House wanted to help, they should focus on funding services and asking autistic people what they need, rather than casting their lives



as diminished.

Maryum Gardner, 26, called the White House position "dangerous".

"It's hard being a neurodivergent person in this world."

But "it doesn't matter who you are", she said. "You still deserve to be treated as a human."

HUMAN DIVERSITY

Barnett acknowledges that many people with autism have it harder than he does, with far more severe symptoms.

Barnett said he was lucky he received support from his family, at school and from specialists to be able to better cope with life in a world that isn't always accepting.

"My struggle goes beyond what you see on camera or how I present myself," he said, pointing to years of speech and occupational therapy as well as socialisation training.

He has worked with experts including Elizabeth Laugeson, a UCLA psychiatry professor, whose decades of experience include developing social skills programming for youth and adults.

Laugeson said the White House rhetoric that is hyper-focused on cures harkens back to an "ugly past" of "fear-based and deficit-based language".

"Autism isn't a tragedy or something to be fixed for many people," said Laugeson. "It's a neurodevelopmental difference."

"It's part of human diversity."

It is important for those with diabetes to have their eyes examined by an eye doctor at least once a year. PICTURE COURTESY: PHOTOFEST—FREDERIK



We may not 'see' diabetes coming

THE National Health and Morbidity Survey 2023 notes that one in six adults has diabetes. Malaysia also has the highest prevalence of diabetes in Southeast Asia. This disease impacts all aspects of health but one of the most significant concerns is its effect on vision.

Diabetes has a major impact on the health and structure of blood vessels, especially the small ones. Because the eye contains many tiny blood vessels, people with diabetes are prone to develop abnormalities in those vessels.

Diabetic patients are 25 times more likely to develop blindness compared with non-diabetic patients, says ISEC Healthcare CEO Dr Wong Jun Shyan.

The risk of diabetic retinopathy increases with the duration of the disease. Generally, diabetic patients with poor blood sugar control tend to have accelerated blood vessel damage compared with patients who have better blood sugar control.

Furthermore, concurrent diseases

such as hypertension, high cholesterol and kidney failure can exacerbate retinopathy.

Other conditions that may be more frequently seen in diabetic patients include the formation of cataracts, glaucoma and corneal diseases.

"Diabetic retinopathy is the chief cause of vision loss in patients with diabetes.

"Therefore, it is very important for those with diabetes to have their eyes examined by an eye doctor at least once a year," says Dr Wong.

Diabetic retinopathy develops over a period of time, usually within five years of the onset of blood sugar abnormalities, he says.

However, early stages of diabetic retinopathy may be asymptomatic.

As many diabetics may not know the exact date of the onset of their disease, it's crucial for them to have an eye examination upon diagnosis as they may already have had diabetes for some time and developed diabetic eye complications.

The major risk factor for diabetic eye complications is the interplay

between blood sugar control and the duration of blood sugar abnormalities.

In other words, those who have poor metabolic control of their blood sugar and those who have had diabetes for a long time will experience the highest risks of diabetic eye complications.

Dr Wong says because the risk of diabetes increases with advanced age, it's only to be expected that the nation would have more diabetic patients in the near future as the population ages.

This will cause the burden of diabetic eye disease to increase.

"The most effective way to prevent complications of diabetes is the stringent control of glucose metabolism. Keep glycated haemoglobin levels to below 6.5 per cent if possible."

Other measures include avoiding smoking, ensuring that blood pressure is well controlled, taking cholesterol lowering medications if high blood cholesterol or blood lipid (fat) levels are elevated, and regular exercise.

Dr Wong says one overlooked factor in people with diabetes is the need to ensure their body weight, or BMI index, falls within a normal range.

Therefore, if you have diabetes, speak with your diabetes doctor and discuss with them to achieving good blood-glucose control and maintain a healthy body weight.

'Climate inaction causing millions of avoidable deaths'

CLIMATE change is ravaging people's health and policy failures are leading to millions of avoidable deaths each year, an international team of experts said.

Opportunities for a "just" climate transition were still on the table but remained "largely untapped", said the Lancet Countdown, an annual study tracking the health impacts of climate change.

The report put figures on some of the most deadly consequences: 546,000 people died each year between 2012 and 2021 because of exposure to heat, a massive increase on figures from the 1990s; and toxic fumes from wildfires killed a record 154,000 last year.

The health journal's report, released shortly before the United Nations COP30 climate talks in Brazil, called for increased investment in zero-carbon energy and climate-resilient infrastructure, and better planning for health challenges.

The authors were fiercely critical of US President Donald Trump's decision to pull his country away from international aid programmes and climate initiatives — with his policies then parroted by some other countries.

"Reversing these harmful policies and progressing climate change action is crucial to protect people's

health and survival," the report said.

With global temperatures in 2024 the hottest on record, going above 1.5°C relative to the pre-industrial period for the first time, the experts listed the many health threats coming from heatwaves, droughts, heavy rain and other climate-related phenomena.

"Climate change is increasingly destabilising the planetary systems and environmental conditions on which human life depends."

Fossil fuel-related air pollution caused more than 2.5 million deaths in 2022 alone, the authors said, slamming the practice of subsidising fossil fuels.

Governments lavished more than US\$950 billion on fossil fuel subsidies in 2023, the report said, highlighting six countries as the worst offenders: Russia, Iran, Japan, Germany, Saudi Arabia and China.

The figure was down on the 2022 record of US\$1.1 trillion, when European governments in particular scrambled to control energy costs after Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine helped cause a price spike.

More generally the authors accused corporations, "key decision-makers" and world leaders of "backsliding" on their climate commitments, halting local actors and community groups for filling the leadership vacuum.



Supported by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission



"Climate change is increasingly destabilising the planetary system and environmental conditions on which human life depends," say experts. PICTURE COURTESY: PHOTOFEST

Malaysian women redefine strength through powerlifting



Women weightlifters face many misconceptions and stigmas.
— Photos: Bernama

THE world of female powerlifting has long been clouded by misconceptions – from claims that lifting heavy weights will make women look “too muscular” to warnings that it could harm their health.

Despite this, three Malaysian women – Amirah Nursaidah Amir Hamzah, Nicole Lee Shu Wei and Dr Izza Arsyika Abdul Rahim, found empowerment through powerlifting.

Amirah and Lee are competitive lifters who had set records at national and regional events, while Dr Izza Arsyika, 37, a medical specialist, discovered strength training as part of her recovery from a sports injury.

Powerlifting is a strength sport focused on lifting the maximum possible weight in three specific

exercises: squat, bench press, and deadlift.

Despite their different backgrounds, the three women share a common goal – to challenge misconceptions about women's participation in strength sports and promote the physical and mental benefits of lifting weights.

“People think female powerlifters can't lift as much as men, but we can squat double our body weight and deadlift triple; we carry babies in our womb during pregnancy,” Amirah, a mother of two, told Bernama.

Before taking up powerlifting, Amirah, 38, struggled with obesity and health issues including a slipped disc and hernia.

After undergoing bariatric surgery in 2019 and working



Amirah (left) and Lee (right) are professional weightlifters who have set new records in several national and regional competitions, while Dr Izza Arsyika (centre), a medical specialist at a hospital, utilises the benefits she reaps from the activity in her daily work.

with a personal trainer, she discovered strength training and entered her first competition in 2021.

She later won bronze in the squat category at the South-East Asian Cup in Johor Baru.

Lee's journey began at 19, shortly after finishing school.

In July 2025, she broke the Asian record with a 151kg squat in the under-52kg category at the Asian Pacific African Powerlifting Championships in Himeji, Japan.

Powerlifting helped her overcome body dysmorphia and manage polycystic ovary syn-

drome, shifting her focus from appearance to performance.

“When I started focusing on what my body can achieve, I let go of the obsession with how it looked,” said Lee, 25, a freelance personal trainer.

Dr Izza Arsyika's strength journey began after a basketball injury in 2018.

Her recovery led her to strength training, which she now promotes to patients as a way to maintain bone and joint health.

Working in a hospital during the Covid-19 pandemic reinforced the importance

of physical strength for healthcare professionals.

“I'm living proof that strength training works. It helps us move better, prevents injuries and keeps us independent,” she said.

All three women continue to defy age-related myths and advocate for progressive training that builds strength and mobility.

For Lee, powerlifting is a celebration of capability.

“Every time I step onto that platform, I'm reminded that I'm no longer punishing my body, I'm merely celebrating what it can do,” she said.

Experts: Eyes on the game better than a ban in keeping children safe

by **GANANTHINI VETHASALAM**
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PETALING JAYA: Online games can blur the line between the virtual and real worlds, and experts say proper regulation and supervision are key to ensuring children's safety and healthy development.

They also emphasised that children should spend more time outdoors and less time on screens.

Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist Dr Rahima Dahlan @ Mohd Shafie of Hospital Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah, Universiti Putra Malaysia, said digital games are now an integral part of many children's social and emotional worlds.

"When used appropriately, games can enhance problem-solving skills, creativity and teamwork, especially when children play collaboratively under healthy supervision.

"But when gaming becomes excessive or unmonitored, it can interfere with sleep, studies, family interaction and mood regulation," she said.

Dr Rahima said for some children, especially those still developing self-control and a firm grasp of reality, the boundary

between the virtual and real worlds can become blurred.

"They may internalise game-based rewards and punishments as reflections of their self-worth, or react to in-game loss as if it were a real-world humiliation," she added.

Dr Rahima said this distortion of reality tends to occur when other vulnerabilities exist, such as poor emotional regulation, loneliness, social isolation or lack of adult guidance.

"In short, games are not inherently harmful. What matters is how children interact with them – the frequency, content, context and level of adult supervision."

According to Dr Rahima, banning games is rarely an effective long-term solution. Instead, she called for greater digital literacy, self-control and proper supervision.

"Roblox, for instance, is a vast platform. Some spaces are educational and creative, while others can expose children to inappropriate content or unsafe interactions.

"Rather than an outright ban, there should be clear regulations, age-appropriate restrictions, parental controls and active monitoring," she said.



Solid game plan: Consistent parental regulation and more outdoor play for children are more sustainable than a blanket ban on games such as Roblox, experts say. – FAIHAN GHANI/The Star

She added that developers and regulators must ensure games have transparent content ratings, built-in safety features and protection from exploitative material or online grooming.

On the call for children to return to "old-school" outdoor play, Dr Rahima said balance is essential.

"Outdoor play, sports and face-to-face socialisation build emotional resilience, empathy and real-world problem-solving. These cannot be fully replicated

online," she said.

SEGi University's Dean of the Education, Languages, Psychology, and Music Faculty, Prof Datin Dr Mariani Md Nor, said games such as Roblox, Minecraft and Fortnite have become deeply integrated into children's development.

"While these platforms encourage creativity and collaboration, they also pose risks when used without proper regulation.

"For some children, the line between the virtual and real

worlds becomes blurred, particularly after long exposure to fantasy and digital rewards.

"This may lead to avatars, desensitisation to violence and difficulty interpreting real-life social cues," she added.

Dr Mariani said excessive gaming can disrupt attention span, sleep and emotional regulation, ultimately affecting academic performance and social relationships.

She urged for stricter content moderation and clearer age-based restrictions, especially for games containing violent, sexualised or gambling-like elements.

"Authorities should establish guidelines to address excessive gaming and promote emotional well-being.

"The goal is to make gaming a safe, guided and developmentally supportive activity," Dr Mariani said.

It was reported that the government was considering banning online gaming platforms such as Roblox and UMI amid concerns that their content could negatively influence young people.

The matter is still under discussion, with any decision to take into account Australia's upcoming regulations on Roblox, due to take effect next month.