

# FOCUS ON NCD CASES AFTER TEEN, 19, GETS HEART ATTACK

Health minister calls on Malaysians to adopt a healthy lifestyle

KANGAR

**N**ON-COMMUNICABLE diseases (NCDs) have reached an alarming prevalence, with a 19-year-old patient becoming the youngest heart attack case at the National Heart Institute (IJN).

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said the Health Ministry would take aggressive steps to tackle the issue.

At the same time, he called on Malaysians to adopt a healthy lifestyle, including regular exercise and eating a balanced diet.

He said high blood pressure or hypertension, high cholesterol, diabetes and obesity were main factors leading to heart attacks, which could become silent killers if ignored.

"According to the findings of the National Health Morbidity Survey 2023, one in three Malaysians suffered from hypertension and high cholesterol, while one in six suffered from diabetes, and one in two were overweight or obese.

"We are concerned about NCDs, which are the leading cause of death, namely heart attacks," he said after opening the *Karnival Sihat Milik Semua* at



Raja Muda of Perlis Tuanku Syed Faizuddin Putra Jamalullail (second from right) gracing the 'Karnival Sihat Milik Semua' event at Dewan 2020 in Kangar yesterday. With him are Raja Puan Muda of Perlis Tuanku Dr Hajah Lailatul Shahreen Akashah Khalil, Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad and Menteri Besar Mohd Shukri Ramli. BERNAMA PIC

Dewan 2020 here yesterday.

Raja Muda of Perlis Tuanku Syed Faizuddin Putra Jamalullail graced the event. With him were the Raja Puan Muda of Perlis Tuanku Dr Hajah Lailatul Shahreen Akashah Khalil and Menteri Besar Mohd Shukri Ramli.

The two-day carnival was among the side programmes held to celebrate the 25th year of the reign of Perlis Raja Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Jamalullail.

In addition, Dzulkefly said his team was also paying attention to diseases caused by smoking like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma and lung cancer.

"After heart attacks, which are

a leading cause of death, cancer is the second most common NCD. However, lung disease — particularly those caused by smoking — could soon overtake heart attack as the second leading killer if not properly addressed," he said.

Meanwhile, the Health Ministry will submit an expert panel's recommendation to ban electronic cigarettes and vape to the cabinet once its study is completed.

Dzulkefly said the recommendation would be a key step towards implementing the ban.

"We are committed to this (vape ban); it is no longer a matter of 'if'. I will present it to the cabinet for deliberation," he said.

He added that enforcement of the Control of Smoking Products for Public Health Act 2024 (Act 852) had yielded positive results, with the number of smoking products in the market dropping from 6,824 before the Act's enactment, to 2,794 in June.

"That means only 40.9 per cent remain. With strict enforcement, I am confident we can effectively regulate cigarette and vape sales.

"Most importantly, we must protect non-adults, students and our children from exposure to vape. Act 852 will be enforced firmly to regulate all smoking products, including vape, for public health," he said. **Bernama**

# KAJI SEBELUM AMBIL JURURAWAT INDONESIA

Cadangan pengambilan tenaga kerja asing perlu diperhalusi elak bertukar jadi polemik

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Putrajaya

**S**atu kajian menyeluruh perlu dilakukan sebelum sebarang cadangan atau dasar membabitkan pengambilan jururawat dari Indonesia untuk berkhidmat di hospital kerajaan dilaksanakan.

Pengerusi Suruhanjaya Perkhidmatan Awam (SPA), Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Jailani Muhamed Yunus berkata, langkah itu penting bagi mengelakkan isu itu menjadi polemik yang akhirnya tidak memberi manfaat kepada mana-mana pihak.

Katanya, perkara itu membabitkan dasar negara dan memerlukan perbincangan mendalam sehingga mencapai keputusan terbaik.

"Dasar ini perlu diteliti secara menyeluruh dan terperinci oleh Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam (JPA) dan Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM)," katanya pada Majlis Perasmian Karnival



KARNIVAL Kerjaya MADANI SPA yang berlangsung selama sehari di Putrajaya menyasarkan kehadiran kira-kira 5,000 pengunjung.

Kerjaya MADANI SPA 2025 di sini, semalam.

Karnival ini diadakan dengan kerjasama Pertubuhan Keselamatan Sosial (PERKESO) bertujuan meningkatkan kefahaman orang ramai berhubung peluang permohonan jawatan dalam sektor perkhidmatan awam dan swasta.

Terdahulu media melaporkan, Konsulat Jeneral Republik Indonesia (KJRI) di Johor Bahru mencadangkan satu kerjasama strategik dengan hospital di Malaysia bagi membolehkan jururawat dari Indonesia berkhidmat di negara ini, sekali gus menangani isu kekurangan

tenaga kerja dalam sektor perubatan.

Konsul Jeneral Republik Indonesia di Johor Bahru, Sigit S Widiyanto berkata, langkah itu adalah situasi 'menang-menang' memandangkan ketika ini kira-kira 70 peratus pesakit antarabangsa di negara ini berasal dari Indonesia.

Sementara itu, Kongres Kesatuan Pekerja-Pekerja Di Dalam Perkhidmatan Awam (CUEPACS) membantah cadangan mengambil jururawat dari Indonesia untuk berkhidmat di hospital kerajaan di negara ini.

Presidennya, Datuk Dr Adnan Mat berkata, cada-



Dasar ini perlu diteliti secara menyeluruh dan terperinci oleh JPA dan KKM"

Dr Ahmad Jailani

ngan itu tidak wajar dilaksanakan memandangkan masih ramai graduan jururawat tempatan yang belum menerima pelantikan tetap atau kontrak.

Jailani berkata, pihaknya tidak mempunyai kuasa dalam penentuan dasar, sebaliknya hanya bertanggungjawab melaksanakan peranan melantik sekiranya dasar itu diluluskan kerajaan.

Katanya, sekiranya dibenarkan, tiada masalah untuk SPA melantik.

"Namun, sekiranya dasar itu mempunyai kekangan atau tidak dapat dilaksanakan, ia adalah tanggungjawab bersama JPA dan KKM untuk meneliti," katanya.



# KKM agresif tangani penyakit tak berjangkit

**Kes serangan jantung termuda direkodkan IJN pesakit 19 tahun**

**Kangar:** Penyakit tidak berjangkit (NCD) dalam kalangan rakyat kini mencapai tahap membimbangkan dengan kes serangan jantung termuda direkodkan Institut Jantung Negara (IJN) ialah pesakit berusia 19 tahun.

Menteri Kesihatan, Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad, berkata Ke-

menterian Kesihatan (KKM) akan menangani isu itu secara agresif, pada masa sama, menggesa rakyat negara ini mengamalkan gaya hidup sihat, termasuk aktif bersenam dan menjaga pemakanan.

Beliau berkata, darah tinggi, kolesterol tinggi, diabetes dan obesiti ialah faktor utama penyebab serangan jantung yang boleh membunuh secara senyap, jika diabaikan.

"Hasil dapatan Tinjauan Kebangsaan Kesihatan dan Morbiditi (NHMS) 2023 menunjukkan satu daripada tiga rakyat Malaysia menghidap hipertensi (tekanan darah tinggi), manakala



Tuanku Syed Faizuddin dan Tuanku Lailatul Shahreen pada majlis perasmian Karnival Sihat Milik Semua di Kangar, semalam. Turut hadir, Menteri Besar Perlis, Mohd Shukri Ramli dan Dr Dzulkefly. (Foto BERNAMA)

satu daripada tiga orang mempunyai kolesterol tinggi, satu daripada enam rakyat Malaysia menghidap kencing manis dan satu daripada dua (rakyat) atau hampir 54 peratus mengalami masalah berat badan.

"Kita khuatir NCD yang menjadi pembunuh utama, iaitu serangan jantung," katanya pada sidang media selepas perasmian Karnival Sihat Milik Semua di sini, semalam.

Perasmian berkenaan disempurnakan Raja Muda Perlis,

Tuanku Syed Faizuddin Putra Jamalullail.

Yang turut berangkat Raja Puan Muda Perlis, Tuanku Dr Lailatul Shahreen Akashah Khalil.

## Tumpu penyakit kronik

Karnival itu berlangsung dua hari bermula semalam sebagai antara program sisipan bersempena sambutan Jubli Perak Pemerintahan Raja Perlis Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Jamalullail.

Selain itu, Dr Dzulkefly ber-

kata, pihaknya turut memberikan perhatian terhadap penyakit kronik seperti penyakit paru-paru akibat rokok, misalnya Penyakit Paru-Paru Obstruktif Kronik (COPD), asma dan paling serius ialah kanser paru-paru.

Beliau berkata, selepas serangan jantung, barah antara NCD yang menjadi punca utama kematian, namun penyakit berkaitan paru-paru seperti penyakit paru-paru kronik akibat rokok juga berpotensi menjadi pembunuh kedua.

BERNAMA

# Leptospirosis not minor illness, public warned

Disease preventable, but delayed treatment could cause severe outcomes: Expert

■ BY KIRTINEE RAMESH  
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**PETALING JAYA:** Although Malaysia has seen a decline in leptospirosis cases, the bacterial infection continues to pose a threat, especially during the rainy season.

In 2015, the country recorded 8,291 cases and 78 deaths. More recently, 2,912 cases and 38 deaths were reported in 2020 and 1,761 cases were recorded in 2021.

States such as Selangor, Kelantan and Sarawak have historically recorded higher case numbers, with outbreaks in 2014, 2015 and 2019.

In contrast, Perak and

Labuan consistently reported fewer cases.

Despite the downtrend, Hospital Canselor Tuanku Muhriz infectious disease specialist Dr Petrick Periyasamy has warned the public not to dismiss leptospirosis as a minor illness.

"Leptospirosis is preventable, but when ignored, it could become life-threatening in just days," he said, adding that the disease could lead to multi-organ failure, particularly in flood-prone and unsanitary environments.

The infection is caused by *Leptospira* bacteria, commonly found in the urine of rats and other infected animals.

Once inside the body, the bacteria spread through the bloodstream and attack multiple organs, including the kidneys, lungs, heart and nervous system.

In the kidneys, the bacteria damage the filtration system, leading to acute kidney failure.

In the lungs, it causes pulmonary bleeding and fluid

buildup, resulting in acute respiratory distress syndrome.

The bacteria could also invade the brain and heart, triggering meningitis or fatal arrhythmias.

"Symptoms often appear between two to 14 days after exposure and may resemble the flu – fever, headache, muscle aches – making diagnosis difficult.

"Delayed treatment could result in the disease progressing rapidly, with severe and sometimes irreversible outcomes."

Periyasamy also warned of a lesser-known route of infection: contaminated canned drinks.

"*Leptospira* can survive on moist surfaces. Cans stored in humid warehouses or delivery trucks may carry the bacteria.

"If someone drinks from an unwashed can, the bacteria could enter through minor cuts or the mouth's mucous membranes."

He cited a 2009 case report in the *Indian Journal of Microbiology* linking a fatal

infection to a contaminated drink can and a 2020 study showing that *leptospira* could survive in certain beverages for up to 15 minutes.

"While rinsing or wiping cans may reduce risk, prevention lies in hygiene and storage practices, especially among food and beverage vendors."

He called for better rodent control, clean storage areas, regular sanitation of surfaces, proper waste management using sealed bins and good personal hygiene among food handlers.

"Cans and bottles should be kept off the floor and away from areas that attract pests."

The spotlight on leptospirosis came following the death of 23-year-old Muhammad Ikmal Azizuddin from Kedah, who fell ill four days after a hiking trip in July.

Ikmal began experiencing fever, diarrhoea and vomiting, but assumed it was just a common illness.

Tragically, he passed away on July 17, before his family could reach him at Hospital Melaka.

According to his father, the infection spread rapidly over just four days, severely damaging his kidneys, lungs, nervous system and heart.

He believes the source of the infection was a canned drink consumed during the hike, which had not been washed beforehand.

In 2020, a 29-year-old man died and four others were hospitalised with suspected leptospirosis after engaging in river activities in Pahang. Authorities linked the outbreak to exposure to contaminated water.

Periyasamy urged health authorities to launch targeted awareness campaigns, especially in urban areas and among food vendors.

These should use clear visuals and simple language, spread through social media, public transport stations, schools and community centres.

He also called for stricter enforcement of vendor hygiene inspections and suggested that basic health and hygiene education be integrated into school curricula.

"Be mindful of your surroundings, especially in places with poor sanitation. Avoid contact with floodwaters, and take hygiene seriously."



The infection is caused by *leptospira* bacteria, commonly found in the urine of rats and other infected animals.  
— ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN





## Hormones and Kids

DR JEANNE WONG SZE LYN

TWELVE-YEAR-OLD Adam loves his toasted bread coated with condensed milk and a sprinkle of chocolate rice for breakfast.

At school, he often grabs fried chicken rice for lunch and a sweet drink on the way home.

In the evening, he's glued to his mobile games, snacking on chocolate biscuits.

His parents notice he has gained weight and recently tires easily, wakes up at night to pee frequently and constantly asks for water.

A visit to the doctor and a simple blood test confirms their fears: Adam has type 2 diabetes.

His parents are shocked: "But he's just a child! Isn't diabetes something only adults get?"

"Did we do something wrong?" If these thoughts sound familiar, you're not alone.

### Unhealthy lifestyle patterns

In Malaysia, nearly one in three children is either overweight or obese, according to a 2022 review in the *Malaysian Journal of Nutrition*.

Globally, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that around one in five children and adolescents aged five to 19 years are overweight, with 8% classified as obese.

With this rising trend comes a worrying increase in young patients presenting with prediabetes or full-blown type 2 diabetes – a condition once considered exclusive to adults.

So why is this happening?

Type 2 diabetes tends to run in families due to a combination of shared genetic factors and lifestyle habits, such as eating patterns and physical activity levels, that increase the risk among close relatives.

The main lifestyle contributors are:

#### > Unhealthy diets

Processed, sugary, and fried foods are often more accessible and cheaper than healthy alternatives.

Many children exceed the recommended daily sugar limit.

#### > Sedentary lifestyle

In previous generations, walking to school or playing outside

was normal.

But children today spend hours indoors on screens: YouTube, mobile games and social media.

Outdoor play and physical activities have become rare in their daily routine.

#### > Poor sleep routines

Staying up late while staring at a screen affects melatonin and cortisol levels, increasing cravings for sugary or fatty foods, which leads to weight gain and insulin resistance.

### Causing insulin resistance

Obesity, especially central obesity (fat stored around the abdomen), plays a key role in the development of type 2 diabetes.

This excess adiposity causes the body to become resistant towards the actions of insulin, which is being produced normally by our body.

The result is that glucose (sugar) builds up in the blood. Our pancreas then tries to compensate by producing more insulin to overcome this "resistance".

Over time, the pancreas becomes "exhausted", and blood sugar levels start to rise.

This is the beginning of type 2 diabetes.

Many people think diabetes only becomes dangerous later in life, but in reality, children with type 2 diabetes are at risk of both acute and long-term complications.

Acutely, they may develop life-threatening conditions like diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA) or hy-

perosmolar hyperglycaemic state (HHS).

Both these conditions can lead to severe dehydration, organ failure, and even coma, if not treated promptly.

Long-term complications, once seen mostly in older adults, can also appear earlier in young people living with type 2 diabetes, including:

- > Nerve damage (neuropathy) – causing tingling, numbness or burning pain.
- > Eye problems – such as diabetic retinopathy, which may lead to blindness.
- > Kidney damage – diabetic nephropathy, which can lead to kidney failure.
- > Heart disease and high blood pressure – increasing risk of heart attacks and strokes, even from a young age.
- > Predisposition to infections.

### Spotting the warning signs

Unlike type 1 diabetes, which develops quickly and dramatically, type 2 diabetes in children often develops silently and gradually, making it harder to detect.

Watch for these red flags:

- > Frequent thirst and urination
- > Tiredness, even with adequate sleep
- > Weight changes – either rapid gain or unexplained loss
- > Dark velvety patches on the neck, armpits or elbows – this is a sign of insulin resistance known as acanthosis nigricans
- > Recurrent infections or slow-healing wounds
- > Mood swings or irritability
- > A simple fasting blood sugar

# From OBESITY to DIABETES

Many Malaysian children are overweight and obese, which in turn is leading to an increase in type 2 diabetes in these young ones.

Avoid ultra-processed snacks like chips and opt for fruit, yoghurt or nuts.

#### > Encourage active play, not just exercise

Many children dislike the idea of "exercise", but love to play.

Try dancing games, cycling, hula-hooping or treasure hunts.

Let them choose a weekend activity: sports, hiking or swimming.

Revive traditional games like batu seremban, congkak or galah panjang.

#### > Limit screen time without battles

You don't have to ban gadgets altogether, but balance is key.

Create "tech-free" zones (e.g. during meals and before bedtime).

Use parental controls or timers to limit passive screen time.

Pair screen use with movement.

#### > Make it a family affair

Children learn by example with a supportive family.

When the whole family makes healthier choices, kids follow naturally.

Encourage positively.

Cook together and let your child choose a veggie to try each week.

Go to the market together and teach them about fresh produce.

Present food creatively, e.g. use colourful bento boxes or cut fruit into fun shapes.

### Start small today

If your child is overweight or has been diagnosed with prediabetes, don't panic and don't blame yourself.

Parenting doesn't come with a manual, and lifestyle changes are often shaped by environment, availability and awareness.

What's most important is what you choose to do today.

Start small and be consistent.

Keep it fun: Movement should be enjoyable, not a punishment.

Do it together: When families act as a team, progress is faster and more sustainable.

As a paediatric endocrinologist, I've seen how easily type 2 diabetes can creep up.

But I've also seen how families who take proactive steps early can turn their child's health around.

Let's give our children the best chance at a healthy, happy life one small step at a time with no blame or shame.

Worried about your child's weight or risk of diabetes?

Talk to your doctor or a paediatric endocrinologist.

Early intervention is the best prevention.

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