

From pain to power with every step

Cancer survivors enliven Pink October Fun Run

By BENJAMIN LEE
benkh@thestar.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: United by the traumatic experience of surviving cancer, people of all ages came together dressed in pink outfits to take part in the Pink October Fun Run 2025.

Held at the Putrajaya Wetlands Park yesterday, the event saw over 700 people taking part to celebrate life, strength, and survival, and to honour those affected by breast cancer.

Organised by the Putrajaya Hospital Surgery Department, the run is aimed at spreading awareness about breast cancer and reminding people that early detection and a positive mindset can save lives.

For Haliza Abdul Halim, 63, a retiree and stage two breast cancer survivor, the day brought back memories of her harrowing struggle against the disease, which almost went undetected.

"It was a challenging path until I got my diagnosis in 2013 as treatments were not as advanced as today.

"I originally detected the lump myself but when I went for a biopsy twice, both times the results came back negative.

"But after discussing it with my doctor, I decided to follow my instincts and have the lump removed."

Haliza's decision proved to be a lifesaver as the removed lump was later tested and confirmed to have cancer cells.



Faces of resilience: Datin Seri Azlin Hezri (centre), wife of Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad, with participants at the Pink October Fun Run 2025 in Putrajaya. — LOW LAY PHON/The Star

This discovery led to her having to go for eight months of gruelling treatment, which included two surgeries, six chemotherapy sessions, and 25 radiotherapy sessions.

"This experience taught me that nothing is impossible if we continue our treatment and keep believing," she said.

Haliza said events like the Fun Run are a great opportunity to meet other survivors and stay fit.

For fellow breast cancer survivor and 49-year-old personal assistant Iza Syafinaz Suhin, the event helped her reflect on her journey.

Diagnosed with stage 1C breast cancer in 2019, Iza Syafinaz had

undergone a lumpectomy and radiotherapy but complications forced her to forgo chemotherapy.

"People assume stage one is mild, but for me, it wasn't easy as two years later, my MRI showed abnormalities in the same spot.

"My doctor advised a full mastectomy and with my husband's support, I decided to remove both breasts, which was extremely life changing," she said.

But she suffered further hardship in 2023 when she had to undergo another major operation to remove her uterus, cervix, fallopian tubes and ovaries after further complications.

Despite this, Iza Syafinaz

remained upbeat about her future.

"Early detection saved me. I walk 3km regularly and take part in cancer support events.

"Keeping active makes me happy and alive, and every October I look forward to these events to show the public that we cancer survivors can live as normal people too," she said.

For computer technician Rozam Zan, 56, the event marked 10 years since she was declared cancer-free and renewed her hope for the future.

"When the doctor told me I had breast cancer 10 years ago, I didn't cry as I believed this was a challenge I must face.

"Even with my steely resolve, the two surgeries and six cycles of chemotherapy caused severe allergic reactions and weakness.

"By the fourth session, I could no longer walk but my husband thankfully stood by and cared for me like I was a baby," she said.

Determined to ensure other survivors don't suffer as she did, Rozam spends her time volunteering through the CanWork programme to help other cancer patients find the will to fight on after recovery.

The Pink October Fun Run also provided participants on-site free health screenings and consultations by doctors.



Lukmanismawati (tengah) bersama penerima Anugerah MyChampion Peringkat Kebangsaan di Kuala Lumpur, semalam.

(Foto: Rohan Is Shukri/BH)

Kes influenza naik, namun terkawal

Masyarakat diminta tak panik, segera ke hospital jika ada gejala

Oleh Saadiah Ismail
Saadiah_ismail@bh.com.my

Kuala Lumpur: Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) memaklumkan kadar konsultasi *Influenza-Like Illnesses* (ILI) menunjukkan peningkatan kepada 10.56 peratus pada Minggu Epidemiologi (ME) ke-42, berbanding 9.63 peratus pada ME ke-41.

Timbalan Menteri Kesihatan, Datuk Lukmanismawati Awang Sami, berkata walaupun terdapat peningkatan minggu ini, keadaan

masih terkawal dan mereka yang bergejala diminta mendapatkan rawatan di hospital dengan segera.

KKM pantau situasi

Beliau berkata, KKM akan terus memantau dari semasa ke semasa dan menggesa masyarakat supaya tidak panik, sekiranya mereka mengalami gejala influenza.

"Sekiranya anak dan juga keluarga mempunyai tanda ataupun masalah berkaitan influenza ini, segera ke fasiliti KKM."

"KKM mempunyai prosedur cukup lengkap dan terbaik, malah Kementerian juga mempunyai laporan daripada semasa ke semasa serta paten yang dikaji," katanya selepas merasmikan Majlis Anugerah MyChampion Peringkat Kebangsaan, di sini, semalam.

Pada majlis itu, lapan anugerah

diberikan bagi mengiktiraf sumbangan sukarelawan yang gigih membantu KKM dalam melaksanakan Agenda Nasional Malaysia Sihat, khususnya dalam pembangunan hidup sihat dan kelestarian persekitaran.

Lukmanismawati menegaskan, setiap kematian yang berlaku berpunca daripada influenza perlu disahkan terlebih dahulu.

"Kebanyakan kes kita masih menunggu keputusan."

"Jadi, KKM masih melihat sama ada kes dilaporkan disebabkan oleh influenza atau tidak."

"Kebanyakan kes yang berkaitan itu adalah kes yang melibatkan individu yang mempunyai masalah kesihatan lain."

"Kita belum mengesahkan ia secara terperinci sebab perlu ada Jawatankuasa Mortality Review di peringkat negeri untuk menelitinya," katanya.

lokal

KKM SAHKAN SITUASI TERKAWAL

Kes influenza bertambah 10.56%

Oleh Mohammad
Khairil Ashraf
Mohd Khalid
khairil.ashraf@hmetro.com.my

Kuala Lumpur

Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) memaklumkan berlakunya peningkatan jangkitan influenza pada Minggu Epidemiologi (ME) 42/2025 iaitu sebanyak 10.56 peratus, berbanding minggu lalu 9.63 peratus.

Timbalan Menteri Kesihatan, Datuk Lukanisman Awang Sauni bagaimanapun berkata, jangkitan influenza di negara ini masih lagi terkawal.

"Apa yang ingin kita sampaikan terutama sekali kepada ibu bapa dan masyarakat di luar sana, sekiranya anak-anak serta keluarga mempunyai tanda-tanda ataupun mempunyai masalah yang berkaitan dengan influenza ini, segera datang ke fasiliti kami.

"Kita mempunyai prosedur yang cukup lengkap dan terbaik. Apa yang saya harapkan agar masyarakat



LUKANISMAN (enam dari kanan) pada Majlis Anugerah MyChampion Peringkat Kebangsaan Tahun 2025. - Gambar NSTP/ROHANIS SHUKRI

tidak panik.

"Kita mempunyai laporan dari masa ke masa dan kita juga mempunyai corak dan juga trend yang kita kaji. Saya harap agar rakyat Malaysia tidak bimbang tentang peningkatan influenza ini," katanya.

Beliau berkata demikian kepada pemberita selepas Majlis Anugerah MyChampion Peringkat Kebangsaan

Tahun 2025 di ibu negara, semalam.

Majlis berkenaan adalah sebuah platform bagi memberikan penghargaan kepada sukarelawan MyChampion disebabkan sumbangan mereka sebagai ejen perubahan yang membantu memperkasa kesihatan rakyat Malaysia.

MyChampion adalah inisiatif di bawah Agenda Na-

sional Malaysia Sihat (ANMS) yang dirangka oleh KKM bagi melahirkan sukarelawan terlatih sebagai ejen perubahan tingkah laku kesihatan dalam komuniti.

Sehingga kini, seramai 17,000 sukarelawan aktif bernaung di bawah agensi merentasi sembilan kementerian termasuk di bawah Jabatan Perdana Men-

teri yang telah berdaftar sebagai ahli MyChampion menerusi aplikasi MySejahtera.

Menyentuh mengenai banjir yang melanda beberapa negeri, Lukanisman berkata, KKM sentiasa bersedia dan bersedia seperti penyediaan pasukan kecemasan, pasukan psikososial dan pasukan kesihatan mental bagi membantu

mereka yang terkesan.

"Kita mempunyai cukup pengalaman dan juga kita mengharapkan agar kalangan masyarakat tidak panik.

"Sekiranya berlaku bencana tersebut, kami bersedia dan akan menempatkan pegawai kami atau di pusat rusan banjirruh negara," katanya.

Influenza situation in Negri under control, says MB

SEREMBAN: The influenza situation in Negri Sembilan remains under control and is being closely monitored by the state health authorities, said Mentri Besar Datuk Seri Aminuddin Harun.

He said that while several cases have been reported in schools, the situation is not alarming and does not warrant additional

measures such as the free distribution of vaccines.

“Parents must ensure their children are in good health before attending school, while senior citizens who are at risk may obtain the vaccine for free at government health clinics,” he told reporters at the closing ceremony of the Negri Sembilan Uniformed

Bodies Sports Championship here yesterday, Bernama reported.

Aminuddin was responding to a question on whether the state planned to offer free Influenza A vaccinations to students, similar to an initiative in Selangor.

Negri Sembilan recorded 299 influenza cases during Epidemiological Week 41 (Oct 5–11), up

from 154 cases the previous week.

On another matter, Aminuddin said local authorities had taken appropriate action regarding a monument in Bandar Tasik Senangin that had raised public concern, reminding that any public structure must be sensitive to community values to avoid misunderstanding.

'Schools must act on warning signs'

By VENESA DEVI and ARFA YUNUS
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

Children's mental health care must not be ignored

PETALING JAYA: The rise in disturbing behaviour among children is a warning sign of deeper social and emotional issues that demand urgent attention, say mental health experts.

Clinical psychologist Urmilah Dass described the situation as a reflection of shifting family dynamics and increasing gadget dependency among children.

"There are several contributing factors behind what we're seeing today. The rising cost of living forces both parents to work, leaving many children without parental closeness or guidance.

"Gadget overuse, easy access to

harmful online content and lack of supervision are also changing how children perceive right and wrong," she said when contacted.

The Covid-19 pandemic, she said, had worsened the situation by pushing children indoors and online, fuelling a "growing epidemic of gadget addiction".

"Children today are exposed to all sorts of negative influences from vaping and pornography to violent content without proper boundaries or monitoring.

"Everything starts at home. Parents need to reconnect with their children by spending time together, guiding them and instill-

ing strong values," she said.

She also said every school should have trained counsellors and psychologists to provide early emotional support.

Psychology expert Prof Dr Intan Hashimah Mohd Hashim of Universiti Sains Malaysia said improving children's wellbeing is a shared priority among parents, schools and policymakers.

"We must recognise that children have different emotional needs. Those with severe conditions such as clinical depression or schizophrenia require professional help and medication, while others struggling with milder

challenges should also receive support," she said.

Positive environments at home and in school could help children develop resilience and reduce the risk of mental health issues or risky behaviours, she said.

"Children need to feel loved, valued and supported through empathy, kindness and compassion," she added.

Mental Illness Awareness and Support Association Malaysia founder and president Anita Abu Bakar said recent bullying-related deaths and gang assaults in schools showed signs of a wider, systemic issue rather than isolated acts.

"What we're seeing now clearly shows there's a huge gap in mental health support for our students, teens and children," she said.

She added it is also important to ensure every school has trained counsellors, peer support systems and safe spaces where students can talk about their feelings without fear or stigma.

"What is needed now is a whole-school mental health approach, where mental health awareness, emotional literacy and peer support are woven into everyday school life," she said.



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The Star 27/10/2025 MS/14

Mental health checks a regular practice in Penang schools.

By IMRAN HILMY
imran@thestar.com.my

BALIK PULAU: Schools are already carrying out periodic mental health screenings for students, says Penang Health Department public health medicine specialist Dr Tan Hooi Shyuan.

She said the data of the screenings was reviewed by school counsellors, where counselling was provided to students.

"Critical cases are sent directly to hospitals, while others are referred to the nearest health clinics.

"The referral system is well established to ensure students receive timely support from healthcare professionals," she said.

Dr Tan said efforts to strengthen mental health support for students were being implemented through joint initiatives by the state health and education departments, together with other agencies and NGOs.

She said Penang had set up a



Community outreach: Students visiting a booth at the state celebration of World Mental Health Day at the Air Putih health clinic in Balik Pulau. — ZHAFARAN NASIB/The Star.

state mental health committee two years ago, chaired by state health, sports and youth exco Daniel Gooi, to improve inter-agency cooperation.

"The committee brings together government agencies, NGOs, hospital specialists and primary healthcare representatives to plan and coordinate mental health programmes," she said,

adding that discussions had begun with the state Education Department on introducing suitable programmes in schools.

She said the committee continued to work with the state Health Department and the exco member's office to expand joint projects to raise awareness and improve interventions.

On Oct 15, 16-year-old Yap

Shing Xuen was stabbed multiple times in her school's female toilet.

A 14-year-old student from the same school was arrested, and police seized two knives and a kerambit.

The incident prompted calls to review school mental health policies to prevent similar tragedies.

Earlier, Dr Tan attended the state-level World Mental Health Day 2025 celebration and National Malaysia Healthy Agenda tour at the Air Putih health clinic.

State Health Department director Datuk Dr Fazilah Shaikh Allaudin launched the event, accompanied by the island's Southwest District health officer Dr Chiew Wye Lee.

Dr Fazilah said this year's World Mental Health Day theme, "Access to Services: Mental Health in Crises and Disasters", was in line with the global theme by the World Federation for Mental Health.

Citing World Health Organisation data, she said one in five people exposed to crises suffered mental health problems

such as depression, anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder.

She said Malaysia saw its depression rate double from 2.3% to almost 4.6% during the Covid-19 pandemic, affecting nearly a million people.

"This shows the urgent need to strengthen the nation's mental health support system," she said.

Visitor Hani Kampun, 38, said awareness was vital to help families spot early signs of stress and emotional struggle.

"Many people still think mental health problems only affect the weak. In truth, anyone can be affected, even children," she said.

Pharmacist Atiqah Akmal Azil, 40, who had faced mental health challenges herself, said such conditions were treatable.

"Mental health problems are like any other illness. With proper treatment and support, recovery is possible," she said.

She added that open conversations, early intervention and accessible counselling could encourage more people to seek help without fear of judgment.

Malaysia must do better with organ donation

IN 2024, Malaysia recorded about 200,000 deaths, or roughly 550 every day. Based on global experience, only about 1% of all deaths qualify for organ donation – typically those who die in hospital under controlled conditions such as brain death, with organs still viable for recovery.

That means Malaysia could potentially be performing around 12 cadaveric kidney transplants every day, or about 4,000 a year. Yet the reality is shocking: we only do around 20 such transplants a year.

This means that out of the 55,000 Malaysians currently undergoing dialysis, 99% will never receive a life-saving kidney transplant.

The reason behind the “1% rule” is simple but sobering: most deaths happen outside hospitals or under conditions where organs cannot be recovered. Even among those eligible, family consent, medical readiness, and logistical challenges reduce the final number of donors further.

However, what makes Malaysia's situation even more concerning is the sharp drop in new organ pledges.

According to official data: In 2022 there were 51,700 new pledges, in 2023 there were 28,000, and in 2024 there were only 15,486, the second-lowest figure since 2019. At a time when awareness should be growing, these numbers are collapsing.

On Dec 15, Malaysia will mark 50 years since our first successful kidney transplant, yet we have only around 400,000 organ pledgers when a nation of our size should have at least three million.

The good news? Registering as an organ donor has never been easier. Through the MySejahtera app, Malaysians can now pledge their organs in under 30 seconds, without forms or hospital visits. It's a small act that could one day save multiple lives.

But technology alone isn't enough. We need a radical change in approach, a pivot towards a coordinated, national effort to normalise organ pledging, support donor families, and modernise our transplant ecosystem.

After half a century, Malaysia must move from good intentions to meaningful action – to save lives, reduce dialysis dependency, and restore hope to thousands waiting.

Malaysia can, and must, do better.

RAVINDER SINGH
Petaling Jaya

The letter writer is an advocate for organ donation and social takaful reform.

THE Private Medical Practitioners' Association of Selangor and Kuala Lumpur expresses its full support for the statement issued by Health director-general Datuk Dr Mahathar Abd Wahab on Oct 24 regarding the legal scope of vaccine administration in connection with the recent controversy over proposed training programmes to authorise pharmacists to perform vaccinations.

The Health Ministry's clarification is both timely and decisive. Under current Malaysian law, the administration of vaccines by injection is a regulated clinical procedure permitted to be carried out only by registered medical practitioners or other personnel explicitly authorised under existing statutes and regulations.

To date, there is no legal authority that allows pharmacists, in their professional capacity, to independently administer

Malaysians' healthcare deserves the highest professional standards

vaccines to patients. Any suggestion to the contrary is legally baseless and professionally irresponsible.

We are deeply alarmed by the public statements issued by certain individuals and representatives of professional bodies that misinterpret, misrepresent, or disregard the governing legal framework.

Such conduct misleads the public, confuses healthcare professionals, and places patients at unnecessary risk. They also undermine the credibility of the professions entrusted with protecting public health.

Patient safety is not negotiable. Public health is not a playground for experimentation. Every act

that involves direct patient care must comply with the laws, scopes of practice, and regulatory standards established by the Health Ministry. Everyone must remember that these standards exist not to restrict care but to protect lives, preserve trust, and uphold the integrity of healthcare.

We urge all professional organisations and practitioners to cease disseminating inaccurate and speculative interpretations of the law. Respect for the Health Ministry and its DG is not optional, it is a duty that underpins the integrity and trustworthiness of Malaysia's healthcare system.

Our organisation stands firmly

behind the DG's leadership and his commitment to uphold the rule of law, professional accountability, and the safety of every patient in this nation.

We are not opposed to progress. We are opposed to recklessness masquerading as innovation, and to convenience being placed above care. Because at the end of the day, the healthcare of Malaysians deserves more than speed or simplicity, it deserves safety, integrity, and the highest professional standards.

DR EUGENE CHOOI
President

**Private Medical
Practitioners' Association of
Selangor and Kuala Lumpur**

Influenza: Silent threat to adults, children alike

Thesun 27/10/2025 MS/26

➤ Essential tips to help protect you, your family

AMID rising influenza cases in the world and Asia, the recent passing of Taiwanese actress Barbie Hsu from influenza-related pneumonia, followed by the death of Chinese actor Liang You Cheng from flu infection and most recently, a three-year-old Malaysian girl due to worsening cold-related complications, serves as a stark reminder of the potentially severe consequences of influenza.

In Malaysia alone, influenza affects 5–15% of the population annually, contributing to thousands of severe illnesses and deaths.

Influenza in adults

Cases often spike during school holiday terms when more Malaysians return from overseas, bringing the virus home. With flu spreading easily through air droplets and close contact, places such as schools, offices and public transport have become hotspots for infection.

Unlike the common cold, influenza hits harder, bringing high fever, sore throat, body aches and extreme fatigue. For most, it is unpleasant but manageable. But for the elderly, pregnant women, young children and those with chronic conditions such as asthma or heart disease, it can turn serious fast. Complications such as pneumonia and respiratory failure can be life-threatening, making early treatment critical.

The challenge is that flu symptoms often mimic Covid-19 and other viral infections. That is why testing is important for the right diagnosis. Warning signs of severe flu include a fever lasting more than three to four days, dehydration, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea. Antiviral medication works best within 48 hours. After five to seven days, complications such as bacterial pneumonia can set in.

Influenza in children

Influenza can strike anyone, but young children, especially those under five, are among the most vulnerable. Their immune systems are still developing, making them more prone to severe symptoms compared to older family members. Influenza can progress rapidly in children, which is



In Malaysia alone, influenza affects 5–15% of the population annually.

why early intervention is crucial to prevent long-term complications that may impact their future lung function.

Severe flu cases in children can lead to pneumonia, dehydration and, in rare cases, infections affecting the brain or heart, such as encephalitis or myocarditis. Symptoms such as high fever, body aches, cough and fatigue should never be dismissed as just another childhood illness. If symptoms persist beyond 48 hours or fever does not subside with medication, parents should seek medical attention immediately. Difficulty breathing, persistent vomiting and signs of dehydration are red flags that require urgent care.

Flu vaccination

The flu vaccine is safe and recommended for children as young as six months old. It significantly reduces the risk of severe illness and hospitalisation. Parents are urged to ignore myths that the vaccine causes the flu. It contains inactivated or weakened virus strains, meaning any mild symptoms post-vaccination are part of the body's natural immune response.

Beyond immediate flu risks, repeated influenza infections can have long-term effects. Repeated inflammation from the flu can increase a child's risk of developing asthma in the future. Children typically experience up to six upper respiratory

tract infections per year, but frequent, severe infections may indicate a higher risk. Regular flu vaccinations and proper asthma management are essential in reducing this risk.

For frequent travellers, particularly to winter destinations, extra precautions are key. Flu strains vary by region. Practicing good hand hygiene and avoiding crowded places whenever possible is essential. Wearing masks, maintaining a healthy lifestyle and carrying hand sanitisers can further reduce infection risk.

Protecting children

Prevention must start early, with schools and daycare centres being common flu hotspots. Schools should encourage regular handwashing, ensure good ventilation, provide nutritious food, and arrange outdoor activities to strengthen children's immune systems. Teaching children to cover their mouths when sneezing and washing hands frequently can help reduce spread.

This article is contributed by Sunway Medical Centre, Sunway City consultant physician, respiratory physician & interventional pulmonologist Dr Megat Razeem Abdul Razak and consultant paediatrician and paediatric respiratory specialist Dr Noor Zehan Abdul Rahim.

Karnival MySPINES 2025 tonjol peranan universiti dalam penyelidikan, pendidikan dan khidmat komuniti

Management and Science University (MSU) melalui Faculty of Health & Life Sciences (FHLS) telah menganjurkan Karnival MySPINES 2025 bersempena sambutan Hari Penglihatan Sedunia 2025, bertemakan *Love Your Eyes, Every Story Counts*.

Program selama dua hari yang berlangsung pada 8 dan 9 Oktober lalu, bertujuan memperkasakan kesedaran penjagaan kesihatan mata, khususnya dalam kalangan pelajar sekolah dan masyarakat umum.

Karnival anjuran bersama MSU Centre of Excellence for Vision and Eyecare (MSU i-CARE) itu menghimpunkan kira-kira 500 peserta melibatkan pelajar MSU, kakitangan universiti, rakan industri serta pelajar SMK Seksyen 18, Shah Alam

MSU perkasa kesedaran kesihatan mata



Mohd Shukri (enam dari kiri) sewaktu pelancaran Karnival MySPINES 2025 di MSU baru-baru ini.

dan SMK Bandar Baru Sungai Buloh.

Inisiatif 'MSU Myopia Screening Prevention and Intervention: A National Eye Health Study (MySPINES)' memberi tumpuan terhadap kajian, pencegahan dan intervensi awal rabun jauh.

Pelancaran Karnival MySPINES 2025, disempurnakan Presiden dan Pengasas MSU, Profesor Tan Sri Datuk Dr Mohd Shukri Ab Yajid serta barisan pengurusan kanan universiti dan wakil industri.

Turut berlangsung pertukaran Memorandum Persefahaman antara MSU dan rakan industri melibatkan SDS Associates, Kimisha Optometrist, Epic Tips Global, Pertubuhan Prihatin Penglihatan Malaysia, Vitop Malaysia Sdn Bhd, Avicena Optometry, Mimata Healthcare, Alpro Optisaver serta Malaysia Association for the Blind (MAB).

MSU turut menerima sumbangan wakaf berjumlah RM419,000 daripada

Bank Muamalat Malaysia Berhad melalui Wakaf Selangor Muamalat (WSM).

Projek MySPINES turut menerima sumbangan keseluruhan RM897,870 daripada pelbagai rakan industri.

Antara penyumbang ialah Kimisha Optometrist Sdn Bhd (RM300,000), SDS Associates Sdn Bhd (RM60,000), Epic Tips Global Sdn Bhd (RM50,000), Pertubuhan Prihatin Penglihatan Malaysia (RM45,000) dan Vitop Malaysia Sdn Bhd (RM23,870).