

AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO  
MUKA SURAT : 7  
RUANGAN : LOKAL

Putrajaya

KKM NAFI DAKWAAN VIDEO TULAR

Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) menegaskan tiada pelepasan nyamuk aedes ber-Wolbachia di Negeri Sembilan buat masa ini seperti yang ditularkan menerusi video di TikTok.

Timbalan Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan (Kesihatan Awam) Datuk Dr Norhayati Rusli sebaliknya berkata video yang tular itu adalah berkaitan dengan Program Eradikasi Malaria dan tiada kaitan dengan Program Kawalan Denggi menggunakan nyamuk aedes berWolbachia.

"Merujuk kepada video tular yang dikongsikan di media sosial TikTok mengenai pelepasan nyamuk Aedes berWolbachia di Negeri Sembilan, KKM berterima kasih kepada pemilik akaun tersebut kerana prihatin dengan situasi semasa denggi di Malaysia.

"Pihak KKM juga ingin menarik perhatian masyarakat kepada peranan komuniti dalam pencegahan denggi iaitu penjagaan kebersihan persekitaran di kawasan kediaman dan kejiranan, penghapusan tempat pembiakan nyamuk Aedes dan penggunaan semburan aerosol dalam premis serta penggunaan alat pelindung diri (PPE) di luar premis seperti bahan penghalau nyamuk," katanya dalam satu kenyataan di sini.

Kenyataan itu dikeluarkan bagi membetulkan beberapa kenyataan tidak tepat dalam video berkenaan.

# Tiada pelepasan nyamuk aedes berWolbachia

Selain itu, beliau turut membetulkan fakta mengenai nyamuk aedes yang didakwa hanya menghisap darah untuk hidup.

Menurutnya nyamuk aedes betina memerlukan darah untuk perkembangan telur namun kedua-dua nyamuk aedes jantan dan betina memerlukan cecair manis (nektar) pada tumbuhan untuk kelangsungan hidup.

Dr Norhayati juga menje-



NYAMUK aedes berWolbachia tidak memberi kesan sampingan kepada nyamuk atau persekitaran dan tidak diubah suai secara genetik.

laskan mengenai Wolbachia yang merupakan sejenis bakteria dijumpai secara semula jadi dalam 60 hingga 70 peratus serangga di alam sekitar dan

bakteria Wolbachia yang disuntik ke dalam nyamuk Aedes aegypti boleh merencat replikasi virus denggi, seterusnya menghalang penularan virus tersebut kepada manusia.

Beliau berkata, nyamuk aedes berWolbachia tidak memberi kesan sampingan kepada nyamuk atau persekitaran dan tidak diubah suai secara genetik.

Katanya hasil penyelidikan di

Malaysia dari 2017 hingga 2019 menunjukkan penurunan kes denggi di lokaliti pelepasan nyamuk Aedes berWolbachia antara 50 dan 80 peratus berbanding lokaliti tanpa pelepasan nyamuk berkenaan.

"Operasi Pelepasan Nyamuk Aedes berWolbachia di Malaysia dilancarkan pada 2019 sebagai strategi tambahan bagi menangani peningkatan kes dan wabak denggi di lokaliti yang melaporkan kes yang tinggi.

"Kaedah ini juga telah dilaksanakan di Australia, Indonesia dan Brazil yang me-

nunjukkan penurunan kes antara 70 dan 76 peratus di lokaliti pelepasan nyamuk aedes berWolbachia. Di Malaysia, sehingga kini operasi ini telah dilaksanakan di tujuh negeri melibatkan 28 lokaliti," katanya.

Beliau berkata setelah dua tahun pelaksanaan operasi pelepasan nyamuk aedes berWolbachia, 16 daripada 19 lokaliti pelepasan (84.2 peratus) (kohort 1 dan kohort 2), menunjukkan trend penurunan kes demam denggi antara 33 dan 100 peratus.

Katanya satu daripada baki tiga lokaliti telah menunjukkan kekal tiada kes denggi, manakala dua lokaliti lagi menunjukkan tiada peningkatan kes denggi dengan bilangan kes yang dilaporkan juga rendah.

Dr Norhayati turut menasihatkan orang ramai agar mendapatkan maklumat yang tepat berkaitan Operasi Pelepasan nyamuk aedes berWolbachia di Malaysia menerusi laman sesawang [www.infoshat.gov.my](http://www.infoshat.gov.my) atau menghubungi hotline KKM di talian 03-88833231 dari Isnin hingga Jumaat bermula 8 pagi hingga 5 petang.

Orang ramai juga boleh melayari pautan laman sesawang [idengue.gov.my/](http://idengue.gov.my/) bagi mendapatkan maklumat terkini denggi.

“  
Operasi Pelepasan  
Nyamuk Aedes  
berWolbachia  
di Malaysia  
dilancarkan pada  
2019  
Dr Norhayati



AKHBAR : THE STAR  
MUKA SURAT : 6  
RUANGAN : NATION

# Desperate for some shut-eye

## Insomniacs are taking flu or cough meds to help them get some sleep

By JUNAID IBRAHIM and  
RAGANANTHINI VETHASALAM  
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**PETALING JAYA:** Working adults who struggle to fall asleep at night are turning to prescription medicines such as cough syrup to help them doze off when other measures don't work.

Data analyst Ahmad (not his real name), who has been suffering from sleep problems for years though not officially diagnosed as insomniac, said he resorted to cough syrup to get his much-needed slumber.

The 30-year-old said he had tried all other remedies such as using warm lighting in the bedroom and reading books before bed, to no avail.

He then turned to cough syrups that were accessible at local pharmacies without stringent controls.

"Cough syrups really help me get sleep."

"I'm aware of the possible consequences but I have no other choice," said Ahmad, who lives in Subang Jaya, Selangor.

At local pharmacies, he would usually be asked the reason why he needed the medicine.

"I'd merely say I have a sore throat. Other than that, I just need to provide my contact information and identification number



**Can't fall asleep:** A joint research found that 54% of working adults in Malaysia are getting insufficient sleep. — ART CHEN/The Star

and it's all good," he added.

Ahmad is not alone. Joint research by Universiti Malaya and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia in 2021 found that 54.7% of working adults in Malaysia had insufficient sleep of less than seven hours daily.

It also said the rate of sleep insufficiency in the sample was much higher in comparison with the United States and Australia, where the rates were 34.8% and 24% respectively.

The local research surveyed a total of 11,356 working adults of various ages.

A writer who declined to be named said he relied on cough mixture to get some shut-eye.

The 29-year-old said he had unsuccessfully tried other methods such as installing blackout curtains and cutting the use of electronic devices an hour before bedtime.

"It's been happening for a while now. Even after I exercise or have

a hard day at work, I can't sleep. When I eventually do fall asleep, it could be close to four in the morning and I'll wake up feeling even more tired.

"With the cough mixture, however, I just doze off easily and get some proper rest."

"I know it's not healthy but for the sake of my sanity, I feel it's a risk worth taking for now."

Aside from cough syrup, flu drugs are another popular option for people with sleep disorders.

A senior executive who preferred not to be identified said she consumed at least one flu pill at night to overcome her insomnia.

"My job can be stressful and sometimes in bed, I'd still be thinking about work. It makes me restless."

"The only way for me to get a good night's sleep is by taking flu medication," she said.

Doctors confirmed that there had been requests for prescription medicines to help people sleep.

"The demand is lower compared with previous times because of strict enforcement from the authorities."

"Nowadays, to sell psychotropic drugs, you need special annual permits and documentation on who you dispense the drugs to. The information has to be recorded in a logbook," said a general practitioner on condition of anonymity.

Another doctor said cough syrups, antihistamines, hypnotics, steroids, benzodiazepines and melatonin were the drugs often requested.

"Prescription drug abuse is quite a common problem. The patients don't usually go to clinics. Many buy them straight over the counter from pharmacies," he said.

## Experts: Cough syrup not the cure for insomnia

**PETALING JAYA:** Consuming cough syrup to address sleeping problems will only lead to other health issues, says senior family medicine consultant Assoc Prof Dr Aznida Firzah Abdul Aziz.

She said a dependency on the medication would cause other difficulties that would not help in addressing the root cause of insomnia.

There are various factors that could contribute to sleeplessness including mental health disorders, she said.

"Some patients who suffer from mental health conditions such as anxiety would be kept up at night."

"The same goes to people with depression. Even though sometimes the disorder could cause excessive sleeping, it could also impair their ability to sleep," she said when contacted.

Dr Aznida explained that sleep deprivation would lead to worse medical conditions in both short and long terms.

Among the health conditions include hypertension, impact on blood sugar and cholesterol levels, risk of heart failure, and others.

The senior lecturer at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia said it is important for someone facing difficulties to sleep to practise better sleep hygiene.

This includes having a fixed bedtime, stopping coffee or alcohol intake before sleep, avoiding the use of electronic devices and increasing physical activities.

A doctor at a government hospital said the dependence on prescription medication does not come about because users want to get "high" but instead, it is consumed to address their health problems.

"The dependence does not begin with the person wanting to abuse substances. People don't usually go for it to get 'high'," he said.

Malaysian Pharmacists Society president Amrahi Buang said the organisation is against the usage of drowsiness-inducing drugs to treat sleep difficulties.

He said patients need to seek professional help and advice instead of self-medicating by consuming substances such as cough syrup and antihistamine.

"If you have an insomnia issue, you should find out the root problem by consulting doctors."

"At pharmacies, we record every drug that is prescribed and we would advise the patients whether they really need the medication," he said.

Amrahi said the bad practices of "self-prescribing" could be overcome if the public have higher health literacy.

### zzzz Sleep tips for adults

- 1 Fix a bedtime and an awakening time.
- 2 Avoid napping during the day.
- 3 Avoid caffeine or alcohol 4-6 hours before bedtime.
- 4 Avoid heavy, spicy or sugary food 4-6 hours before bedtime.
- 5 Exercise regularly, but not right before bed.
- 6 Find a comfortable temperature setting for sleeping and keep the room well ventilated.
- 7 Block out all distracting noise and as much light as possible.
- 8 Reserve the bed for sleep and sex.
- 9 Practise relaxation techniques before bed.
- 10 Don't take your worries to bed.

Source: Health Ministry's Sleep Service Guidelines

The Star graphics



AKHBAR : THE SUN  
MUKA SURAT : 8  
RUANGAN : SPEAK UP



AKHBAR : THE SUN  
MUKA SURAT : 9  
RUANGAN : SPEAK UP

COMMENT

## Strategies to control and prevent dengue cases

BY LAYLA AQEELA KHAIRUL ANUAR, KISHVAN NAIR, RESHGI VAISHALI  
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BENG ENG

ACCORDING to data from the Health Ministry, the number of dengue cases has risen by 150%, with the death toll increasing by 180% since 2021. These figures indicate the severity of the situation.

This outbreak has a profound impact on the population, posing a serious threat to public health and imposing significant burdens on the healthcare system, further straining available resources.

Severe cases of dengue can result in hospitalisation and, in some instances, fatalities. The surge in dengue cases, especially during peak transmission seasons, can overwhelm healthcare facilities and compromise patient care.

Concerted efforts are being made by healthcare personnel and the public to combat this ongoing and rising threat by implementing rigorous mosquito control measures and adopting effective strategies for disease management.

Dengue treatment can pose a significant financial burden on individuals, families and healthcare

systems. The cost of hospitalisation, diagnostic tests, medications and follow-up care can be substantial, especially for the lower-income group.

Increased expenditures spent on managing dengue outbreaks will no doubt strain healthcare budgets, diverting resources from other essential health services.

To eradicate dengue, a multifaceted approach is needed. A variety of initiatives can be undertaken by healthcare personnel. Before any initiatives can be implemented, the healthcare system must be strengthened.

Improving dengue diagnosis and reporting systems for early detection and timely response are measures that can help.

Healthcare professionals can identify cases more quickly and initiate appropriate management strategies by improving the efficiency of diagnostic processes.

Furthermore, it is crucial to provide training and resources to healthcare professionals.

The management of dengue is continuously changing with the rapid development of technology to ensure better patient outcomes. Thus, continuous medical education and workshops are vital in keeping healthcare professionals up to date with the latest advancements in dengue management.

A comprehensive mosquito surveillance system is essential for identifying high-risk areas and monitoring mosquito populations. Regular larval and adult mosquito surveys should be conducted to assess the abundance and distribution of dengue vectors.

Targeted control measures can be implemented by collecting data on mosquito breeding sites and population dynamics. Integrated Vector Management (IVM) is a holistic approach to mosquito control that combines various strategies.

Source reduction, which involves eliminating or modifying mosquito breeding sites, is a crucial component of IVM. This can be achieved by promoting proper water storage practices, ensuring proper drainage and regularly cleaning and emptying water containers.

In addition, larvicide (treating

water bodies with larvicidal agents) and adulticide (controlling adult mosquitoes) should be conducted. Targeted adult mosquito control measures, including space spraying, should be implemented in high-risk areas to reduce the adult mosquito population.

The public can also play a crucial role in ensuring that dengue transmission is curbed. Public awareness campaigns to educate individuals about dengue transmission, symptoms and preventive measures should be carried out.

Participating in these campaigns will make the public aware of the dangers of dengue and be responsible, leading them to be more proactive in protecting themselves.

Personal protective measures are vital in reducing mosquito bites, such as using mosquito repellents, wearing protective clothing and using bed nettings. It is also essential to minimise mosquito exposure by avoiding outdoor activities during peak mosquito activity times, typically early in the morning and late afternoon.

Individuals can significantly reduce mosquito breeding sites in

their homes and communities by taking simple steps. These include emptying and cleaning water containers regularly, covering water storage containers to prevent mosquitoes from accessing them, and ensuring proper drainage to avoid stagnant water accumulation.

Combating dengue is everyone's responsibility. By engaging in community clean-up campaigns and efforts to eliminate mosquito breeding sites, individuals can contribute to creating a dengue-free environment.

Community-based surveillance can also be established, with community members reporting and monitoring potential breeding sites. Addressing and handling this disease should start at the community level by collaborating with local authorities and community leaders and healthcare providers.

In conclusion, preventing dengue in Malaysia requires a multifaceted approach involving healthcare personnel and the public. By working together, we can effectively control dengue.

Comments:

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