

AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO  
MUKA SURAT : 16  
RUANGAN : LOKAL

PESAKIT LEWAT MASUK WAD KERANA KEBAKARAN DI BILIK SUIS UTAMA SUBSTATION HTJS

## 'Tidak ada katil kosong juga faktor'

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

Kuala Lumpur

Jabatan Kesihatan Negeri (JKN), Negeri Sembilan dan Hospital Tuanku Ja'afar Seremban (HTJS) mengakui terdapat kelewatan kemasukan sebahagian pesakit ke wad, Jumaat lalu.

Pengarah Kesihatan Negeri, Datuk Dr Harlina Ab-

dul Rashid berkata, ini disebabkan berlaku kebakaran di bilik suis utama substation hospital pada hari itu yang menyebabkan sedikit gangguan operasi.

"Selain jumlah kedatangan pesakit di Jabatan Kecemasan dan Trauma (ETD) yang agak tinggi pada waktu itu, ketiadaan katil kosong di wad juga menyumbang kepada kelewatan.

"Bagi mengurangkan kesesakan yang timbul, sebuah *discharge lounge* yang

memuatkan enam katil dan *holding bay* dengan kapasiti 12 katil sebagai wad transit sementara disediakan untuk mengurangkan impak kelewatan," katanya dalam satu kenyataan.

Sebelum ini dilaporkan berlakunya kesesakan katil luar biasa di wad HTJS mencetus kebimbangan orang ramai yang mahu mendapatkan rawatan di hospital

berkenaan.

Di ruangan Pendaftaran Kecemasan terdapat ramai dalam kalangan pesakit tidak dapat ditempatkan di wad sepatutnya akibat bilik wad penuh.

Dr Harlina berkata, sebagai langkah penambahbaikan seterusnya, tindakan yang dirangka sebelum ini akan terus diperkasa dan

diaktifkan sekiranya situasi sama berlaku supaya

isu menunggu lama dapat diatasi pada masa akan datang.

Katanya, antara tindakan itu adalah dengan memantau situasi setiap syif di ETD supaya pesakit dapat diberikan keutamaan yang bersesuaian, melaksanakan aktiviti *step-down* pesakit iaitu memindahkan kes bersesuaian ke hospital lain di Negeri Sembilan jika perlu, serta mobilisasi segera kakitangan tambahan ke ETD jika diperlukan.

"Selain itu, orang ramai

yang mempunyai gejala ringan turut dinasihatkan untuk mendapatkan rawatan di klinik kesihatan terdekat.

"Ini bagi membolehkan ETD di hospital memberikan tumpuan kepada kes-kes kecemasan dan mengurangkan kesesakan di hospital.

"HTJS dan Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) kekal komited dan akan sentiasa memastikan tiada kompromi dalam kualiti perawatan pesakit," katanya.

Melaksanakan aktiviti  
step-down pesakit iaitu  
pindah kes bersesuaian  
ke hospital lain



AKHBAR : THE STAR  
MUKA SURAT : 5  
RUANGAN : NATION

# Slimming craze thins supply

Diabetics face medicine shortage amid Ozempic weight-loss fad

By RAGANANTHINI VETHASALAM  
and BENJAMIN LEE  
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

**PETALING JAYA:** The global craze over Ozempic as a weight-loss solution has hit Malaysia, with pharmacies experiencing a surge in demand for the diabetes medication, resulting in a shortage.

Malaysian Pharmacists Society president Amrahi Buang confirmed the shortage, attributing it to increased demand from non-diabetic individuals for its weight loss effects.

"There are many who are interested only in the drug's weight loss potency, creating a huge demand and a shortage in the market," he said.

Amrahi noted that Ozempic, while requiring a prescription, is somehow being accessed by non-diabetics.

"This is supported by many reports of Ozempic being misused by non-diabetic individuals for weight loss although it is not approved for that purpose in Malaysia."

Amrahi warned against using drugs for unapproved purposes without medical supervision, emphasising that potential side effects of Ozempic include hypoglycemia or low blood sugar, which could be life-threatening.

"The public should always consult pharmacists on the proper use of medication to prevent unintended consequences," he added.

Ozempic is a semaglutide, which is an injectable medication that helps adults with Type 2 diabetes manage their blood sugar levels.

Checks also showed that Ozempic-based weight loss packages are also being promoted by aesthetic clinics.

According to Malaysian Community Pharmacy Guild honorary secretary Rachel Gan, demand for the drug has increased, with some individuals self-prescribing or sourcing it online.

"This is definitely not safe. They should consult a doctor before using any medication," Gan cautioned.

She added that distributors have even started rationing supplies, limiting bulk orders to ensure broader access.

Dr Wong Teck Wee, a consultant interventional cardiologist at

**"The public should always consult pharmacists on the proper use of medication to prevent unintended consequences."**

Amrahi Buang

iHEAL Medical Centre, highlighted the immediate side effects of Ozempic and other semaglutide, citing a 2021 New England Journal of Medicine study.

"Between 44% and 47% of participants taking semaglutide for weight loss experienced nausea, while 30% to 35% reported having diarrhoea.

"Another 24% to 30% of participants also had constipation and vomiting, although these were mild to moderate with the symptoms diminishing with continued use," he said.

Dr Wong also noted anecdotal reports of psychological effects such as mood changes, anxiety and stress.

More severe cases involved dehydration, which could harm kidney function, particularly in those with pre-existing kidney conditions.

"A 2022 meta-analysis published in Diabetes Care also found a low but notable risk of renal complications, primarily related to dehydration," he added.

Regarding long-term effects, Dr Wong pointed out that they remain unclear since Ozempic was approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) only in 2017.

However, he cited a 2021 The Lancet study that found that 1.4% of semaglutide users experienced gallbladder-related issues, compared to 0.4% in a placebo group.

"This is likely due to the body breaking down fat too quickly as Ozempic can cause rapid weight loss of up to 10kg a month, leading to bile imbalances," he explained.

Dr Wong said that rare but

## What is semaglutide?



### •Anti-diabetic medication

used to treat patients with type 2 diabetes

- Administered either by weekly injections or daily tablets depending on the brand
- Designed to control blood sugar levels in adults together with diet and exercise
- Also used to lower the risk of heart attack, stroke, or death in these patients

### How does it work?

- Lowers glucagon hormone (which increases blood sugar level) production by the body
- Increases insulin hormone (which lowers blood sugar level) production by the body
- Delays gastric emptying which reduces appetite, making you feel full faster and for longer

### Common side effects

- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach (abdominal) pain, bloating, and constipation

### Possible serious side effects

- Pancreatitis - upper stomach pain, and nausea
- Hypoglycemia - headache, weakness, and fast heart rate
- Kidney problems - kidney swelling, and other urinary issues
- Gallbladder problems - jaundice, upper stomach pain, and clay-coloured stool
- Vision changes

Source: <https://www.drugs.com/semaglutide.html>

The Star graphics

serious side effects, such as acute pancreatitis, have also been reported, although causality has not been definitively established.

Dr Lim Chong Wei, an endocrinology, diabetes and internal medicine specialist at Sunway Medical Centre, clarified that semaglutide was originally approved as a weekly injection for Type 2 diabetes, typically combined with the right diet and exercise.

"Later, a higher-dose formulation received FDA approval for chronic weight management, making it one of the first medications specifically cleared for this purpose," he said.

Dr Lim emphasised that

semaglutide should be used alongside lifestyle and dietary changes, where these modifications alone often lead to minimal weight loss.

"I prescribe it to patients with obesity-related conditions such as diabetes, prediabetes, hypertension or sleep apnea, where the benefits outweigh the risks," he added.

Common side effects include nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea, he said, while serious complications such as pancreatitis are rare.

"Individuals with a personal or family history of thyroid cancer should consult their healthcare provider before starting the medication," said Dr Lim.



AKHBAR : THE STAR

MUKA SURAT : 6

RUANGAN : NATION

# Still short on healthcare staff

## Infrastructure failures also among issues plaguing MOH this year

By RAGANANTHINI  
VETHASALAM  
raga@thestar.com.my

**PETALING JAYA:** As the year draws to a close, the healthcare sector reflects a turbulent year of challenges and progress.

In ending 2024, Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad officially marked one year in office following his return to the health portfolio during the Cabinet reshuffle in December 2023.

Previously, Dzulkefly had served as Health Minister for 22 months under the Pakatan Harapan administration.

Throughout the year, a long-standing issue in Malaysia's healthcare sector – the shortage and uneven distribution of healthcare workers – remained a concern.

Between 2019 and 2023, some 6,417 permanent and contract medical officers resigned from the service.

Dzulkefly, however, clarified that 3,200 of these resignations were procedural, as these individuals transitioned into permanent roles.

Infrastructure failures also



**Problem solved:** The operating theatres at the Serdang Hospital Heart Centre's new wing are now fully operational. — AZLINA ABDULLAH/The Star

plagued the sector, notably at the Serdang Hospital Heart Centre's new wing.

*The Star* broke the story in May that four operating theatres in the 18-month-old facility were non-functional due to faulty air conditioning, delaying surgeries

for some 1,000 heart patients.

Although immediate repairs were ordered, multiple electrical issues caused another three-week closure of some of the operating theatres just a month later.

Deputy Health Minister Datuk Lukmanis Awang Sauni informed the Dewan Rakyat last month that repairs and upgrades were completed by Aug 15, with the theatres now fully operational.

*The Star* had also reported in March that a shortage of cardiothoracic surgeons left some 1,500 heart and lung disease patients in dire straits in government hospitals.

The issue stemmed from Malaysian graduates of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh being unable to practise locally due to non-recognition of their qualifications by the Malaysian Medical Council.

What began as a conflict between the parallel pathway and Master's specialist training programmes – which further exacerbated the existing specialist shortage – ended on a high note with amendments to the Medical Act.

These amendments, passed by

Parliament, addressed specialist registration issues and recognised the parallel pathway training programme by the Health Ministry, alleviating the specialist shortage.

Medical inflation and rising insurance premiums dominated the headlines later in the year, with some policyholders reporting increases of 40% to 70%.

Unable to bear these costs, some individuals abandoned their insurance coverage altogether.

To curb the crisis, Bank Negara Malaysia intervened, directing insurers to cap premium hikes at a maximum of 10% annually.

Looking ahead to 2025, the introduction of Diagnosis-Related Groups is expected to be a significant reform in Malaysia's healthcare system next year.

This will establish a predetermined payment system, replacing the current fee-for-service model, to streamline healthcare costs.

While 2024 highlighted the pressing challenges within the healthcare sector, steps towards policy reform and infrastructure improvement offer hope for a more efficient and accessible healthcare system in the coming year.