

AKHBAR : KOSMO  
MUKA SURAT : 16  
RUANGAN : NEGARA



HEE SEM (kanan) menunjukkan bungkus daging beku ketika Op Tahun Baharu Cina di salah sebuah pasar raya di Batu Berendam, Melaka kelmarin.

6,016 premis makanan diperiksa, 61 diarahkan tutup

## Kompaun kedai makan kotor RM1 juta

† Oleh AMRAN MULUP

**MELAKA** - Sebanyak 2,002 kompaun bernilai RM1,019,150 dikeluarkan Jabatan Kesihatan Negeri (JKN) ke atas premis makanan yang didapati kotor selain melanggar peraturan ditetapkan antaranya pekerja tidak memakai apron tahun lalu.

Pengerusi Jawatankuasa Kesihatan, Sumber Manusia dan Perpaduan Melaka, Ngwe Hee Sem berkata, tindakan itu diambil di bawah Peraturan-Peraturan Kebersihan Makanan 2009.

Menurutnya, JKN telah menjalankan pemeriksaan ke atas

6,010 premis makanan dengan 61 daripadanya diarahkan tutup di bawah Seksyen 11 Akta Makanan 1983.

"Antara kesalahan utama premis dikenakan kompaun adalah kerana tidak bersih. Dapur didapati kotor, tempat simpan barang selain peniaga atau pekerja tidak memakai apron.

"Sepanjang tahun ini, sebanyak 347 premis telah diperiksa yang mana empat telah diarahkan tutup dan 73 lagi dikenakan kompaun keseluruhan berjumlah RM25,200," katanya ketika Operasi Tahun Baharu Cina di Batu Berendam di sini kelmarin.

Tambah Hee Sem, daripada 6,010 premis membabitkan restoran, kedai makan dan peniaga yang diperiksa, sebanyak 2,219 premis mencapai gred A iaitu antara 86 hingga 100 peratus, 903 (gred B), 48 (gred C) dan empat di bawah 43 peratus.

"Mengenai pemantauan terhadap produk makanan pula, sepanjang Op Tahun Baharu Cina sehingga 30 Januari lalu, sebanyak 782 produk makanan disita membabitkan nilai RM3,421.88.

"Produk terbabit telah dikeluarkan daripada rak pameran jualan mengikut Seksyen 4 (1) (f) Akta Makanan 1983," ujarnya.

AKHBAR : THE STAR  
MUKA SURAT : 8  
RUANGAN : NATION

8 Nation

THE STAR, FRIDAY 2 FEBRUARY 2024

# Burning the candle at both ends

## Govt urged to look into 'forgotten baby syndrome' among healthcare workers

By MARTIN CARVALHO and  
RAGANANTHINI VETHASALAM  
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

**PETALING JAYA:** Healthcare groups want the Health Ministry to determine if burnout and fatigue were factors contributing to fatal "forgotten baby syndrome" incidents involving healthcare workers.

Over the past four months, there had been two deaths involving children of healthcare workers after the youngsters were accidentally left in the car.

"We urge the Health Ministry to look into whether tiredness from being overworked may have been a contributing factor. This is to prevent similar incidents.

"Fatigue can cause lapses in concentration, memory and judgement," Malaysian Medical Association president Dr Aziz

Abdul Aziz said when contacted yesterday.

There have been reports over the years of overworked and burnt-out doctors and hospital personnel due to a shortage of manpower and a high patient load.

On Tuesday, a five-year-old girl died after being accidentally left in a car by her mother at Hospital Shah Alam's parking lot.

Initial police investigations revealed that the mother is a hospital staffer.

She is said to have unintentionally left her daughter there after picking her up from a daycare centre.

Last October, an eight-month-old girl died after being left in a car by her doctor mother for several hours at the parking lot of Hospital Canselor Tuanku Muhriz UKM in Kuala Lumpur.

There were two other fatal "forgotten baby syndrome" incidents involving non-medical personnel on Oct 24 and Nov 8 last year.

Hartal Doktor Kontrak spokesman Dr Muhammad Yassin, when contacted yesterday, said fatigue and being overworked are issues of concern.

Overworked personnel, he said, are "dangerous" staff members.

He cited the airline industry as an example, where overworked pilots are given time off.

"Why are overworked nurses and doctors forced to work?" he said.

However, Dr Muhammad said the issue should not only be looked at by the Health Ministry but all employment sectors, especially those with working mothers.

"Everyone, especially working mothers, should not be impacted

by excessive work or working schedules that are harmful to their well-being," he added.

The "forgotten baby syndrome" cases have led to the Women, Family and Community Development Ministry making it compulsory for nursery operators to contact parents if their child is absent to prevent accidental deaths of children left in cars.

The Star has also highlighted the issue in the past, with road safety and medical experts providing tips on how to prevent such situations.

Children's Commissioner Farah Nini Dusuki, when contacted, spoke about the pressure faced by healthcare workers.

"The workload of junior doctors and housemen, especially those in the Health Ministry, is excessive.

"Employers need to be more

sensitive and have policies at work to support young parents or parents with young children," she said.

She also agreed with the practice of nurseries calling parents if their children are late to daycare centres.

A doctor, who did not want to be named, said the ministry should look into these incidents because it involves healthcare workers.

"While stress or overwork may be the cause, we cannot say this for certain.

"However, it is still very concerning.

"We need the hospitals and clinics to look at the well-being of their employees," he said.

He said the blame should not be placed on parents, specifically mothers, as such incidents could happen to anyone.

# 'Standardise health screening of migrant workers'

**PETALING JAYA:** Foreign workers coming into Malaysia should undergo mandatory health screening in their own country that is similar to the one carried out by Fomema to strengthen the nation's health safety net against communicable diseases, says the Association of Employment Agencies Malaysia (Papa).

Despite the requirement for pre-departure medical screening of Malaysia-bound workers, there are still cases of workers testing positive for communicable diseases when they arrive in the country, it said.

"Since the Fomema medical tests here are final, the same mandatory screening checklist of diseases should also be adopted at the source country before workers' departure applications are allowed for processing," said Papa vice-president Suresh Tan when contacted yesterday.

He said he personally experienced a situation where two foreign domestic workers, who

had passed their health screening at the source country, failed their Fomema screening due to the presence of inactive communicable diseases.

"This could pose a dilemma for families as the maids would have moved into the homes of their employers for a week or two while waiting for their Fomema results.

"It creates unnecessary stress and worry for the families if a contagious disease is detected, especially if the maids are taking care of young children or the elderly," he added.

Tan said both employers and local employment agencies would have to incur extra cost and time to make a fresh application for a replacement helper in such a situation.

"Some families have to wait four months for a maid but end up having to wait longer if the maid fails the Fomema screening here. We'll have to start the application process all over again for a replacement maid.

"Some employers may get desperate and hire foreign maids illegally," he added.

Tan said that under the previous Foreign Workers Centralised Management System, the Immigration Department would provide a list of medical centres to Malaysian embassies for employment agencies at the source countries to conduct pre-departure health screening of workers at.

He suggested that Fomema provide and ensure compliance of mandatory health screenings at accredited health facilities at the source country.

According to Fomema, a total of 6,413 cases of tuberculosis, 3,347 of Hepatitis B, 960 syphilis, 447 HIV, 22 malaria and three cases of leprosy were detected among foreign workers in the country in 2023.

On Tuesday, the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) expressed concern that there were still foreign workers testing positive for communicable diseases upon arriving here

despite screening at their source countries.

Its president Dr Aziz Abdul Aziz said this may be due to a lack of compliance or a result of the involvement of middlemen in the application process.

She suggested that employers be given the freedom to choose their medical provider for the pre-departure medical screening of foreign workers.

SME Association of Malaysia president Ding Hong Sing supported the proposal by MMA, saying it would ensure that foreign workers arriving here do not have communicable diseases.

He said that currently, employers would engage a foreign worker agency locally to liaise with their counterparts to handle the necessary matters.

"Employers here will not know who the employment agents are at the source countries or the medical facilities that carry out the health screenings," he said.

He added that local employment agencies would have to bear

the cost of replacing foreign workers who fail the Fomema screening upon arrival.

Ding urged the government to reconsider the mandatory annual health screening for foreign workers, which, he said, poses a huge financial burden on small and medium enterprises and companies that have a large workforce.

He also suggested Fomema to make health screening results available to employers for record purposes.

Last December, Fomema raised the health screening fees to RM207 for males and RM217 for females.

The health screening was expanded to include three new categories, namely filariasis (roundworm), Hepatitis C and methamphetamine.

On Jan 3, Fomema announced that the fresh intake of foreign workers must undergo mandatory health screenings annually.

This rule came into force yesterday.

AKHBAR : THE SUN  
MUKA SURAT : 5  
RUANGAN : NATIONAL

FRIDAY | FEB 2, 2024

NATIONAL 5

# Work-from-home trend impacting mental health

➤ Clinical depression and generalised anxiety disorder among issues spawned in remote work scenarios, says expert

■ BY **SIVANISVARRY MORHAN**  
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

**PETALING JAYA:** The work-from-home concept, which gained popularity in recent times due to its flexibility, improved work-life balance and time saved in commuting between work and home, appears to have a darker reality.

Malaysian Mental Health Association president Prof Datuk Dr Andrew Mohanraj Chandrasekaran said the negative impact on mental health caused by the work-from-home transition is becoming apparent.

"As the country navigated the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, the spotlight intensified on the various implications that working from home introduced to an individual's psychological well-being.

"This paradigm shift in work arrangements triggered a closer examination of the intricate relationship between remote work and mental health. It has unveiled a landscape that

demands exploration and understanding."

According to a survey report by Jobstreet Malaysia, 67% of companies that are still operating have mandated their employees to work-from-home, but the survey said 48% of employers cited reduced productivity among their staff.

Jobstreet said the preference for remote work is notably high among Gen X employees at 72% and Gen Y at 71%, followed by baby boomers at 66% and Gen Z at 64%.

Andrew, who is also a consultant psychiatrist, said loneliness is a significant concern for individuals working from home, leading to mental health issues.

"An examination conducted by the Integrated Benefits Institute, a non-profit research organisation headquartered in Oakland, California, revealed 40% of individuals who are fully working from home and 38% of those engaged in hybrid work arrangements exhibited a higher likelihood of having symptoms associated with anxiety and depression."

He said symptoms such as decreased motivation, social isolation and fatigue became prevalent among those working from home.

"Contrary to the belief that solitude promotes calmness, remote workers experienced heightened stress hormones in their bodies. Studies have also established a strong connection between loneliness and disrupted sleep patterns, with lonely individuals being more susceptible to

sleep fragmentation."

He also said lonely people may suffer a weakened immune system and increased inflammation, making them more vulnerable to illnesses.

"Burnout, typically attributed to prolonged workplace pressure, can also be exacerbated by loneliness, and this has a link between extended periods of isolation and the increased susceptibility to burnout."

Andrew Mohanraj said clinical depression, a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest, and generalised anxiety disorder or constant worrying are among mental health conditions commonly reported in remote work scenarios.

"Employees with pre-existing mental health conditions or those with Type B personalities, which are characterised by need for relationships, extroversion and enthusiasm, are particularly at risk."

He emphasised recalibrating work-from-home benefits for employees, highlighting the need to shift focus from mere flexibility to the creation of a conducive workspace that nurtures work-life balance.

"Employers play a critical role in safeguarding mental well-being of their workforce and they have to monitor mental health symptoms of their employees.

"This involves being attuned with their well-being through regular check-ins, fostering open communication channels and providing resources for mental health support."



Andrew Mohanraj said loneliness is a significant concern for individuals working from home, leading to mental health issues.

— ADIB RAWI  
YAHYA/THE SUN