

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 1
RUANGAN : MUKA HADAPAN



Lonjakan vape merisaukan

2011: 0.8%  2023: 3.9%

Vape atau rokok elektronik yang diuar-uarkan sebagai pengganti rokok didapati tidak memberi kesan ketara dalam mengurangkan tabiat menghisap rokok tembakau apabila kaji selidik Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) Malaysia 2023 mendapati peratusan kedua-dua penggunaan itu catatkan trend peningkatan. Ia turut mendedahkan, kumpulan mereka berusia lebih muda iaitu 15 hingga 24 tahun paling ramai menghisap rokok elektronik.

Oleh Fahmy A Rosli → Nasional 4

Kurang tekanan inflasi, kawal defisit belanjawan antara empat kesan langsung rasionalisasi subsidi bahan api: Penganalisis *Bisnes 20*

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 4
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Vape tak kurangkan ketagihan merokok

Kajian GATS dapati pengguna peranti elektronik, rokok tembakau terus meningkat

Oleh Fahmy A Rosli
fahmy.azril@bh.com.my

Kuala Lumpur: Kewujudan vape yang didakwa boleh menjadi produk atau peranti alternatif yang 'lebih sihat' bagi menggantikan rokok konvensional, tidak memberi kesan ketara dalam mengurangkan tabiat menghisap rokok tembakau.

Itu rumusan tinjauan Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) Malaysia 2023 yang menunjukkan peratusan kedua-dua pengguna iaitu perokok dan penghisap rokok elektronik mencatatkan trend peningkatan, daripada 0.8 peratus pada 2011 kepada 3.9 peratus tahun lalu.

Tinjauan sama turut mendapati ramai pengguna rokok elektronik kebanyakan daripada mereka dalam kalangan kumpulan usia yang lebih muda.

Berdasarkan kajian GATS Malaysia 2023 yang diterbitkan oleh Institut Kesihatan Umum, Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) 16 Mei lalu, golongan berumur dalam lingkungan 15 hingga 24 tahun paling ramai menghisap rokok elektronik dengan 8.6 peratus.

Ia disusuli mereka berusia 25

hingga 44 tahun (7.1 peratus), 45 hingga 64 tahun (2.8 peratus) dan 65 tahun ke atas (0.7 peratus).

Secara keseluruhan, kajian itu menunjukkan prevalens atau jumlah individu yang merokok merokokkan penurunan, kecuali dalam kalangan wanita dengan prevalens kebangsaan perokok semasa berlegar pada tahap 19 peratus, iaitu penurunan daripada 21.3 peratus pada 2011.

Jika dilihat data kajian itu, prevalens perokok tembakau membabitkan golongan lelaki mencatatkan penurunan 35.7 peratus, manakala wanita meningkat 1.5 peratus sejak 2011.

Bagaimanapun, angka berkenaan masih di bawah sasaran 15 peratus atau kurang menjelang 2025.

Perisa vape jadi tarikan

Kajian itu turut merumuskan, faktor utama mereka yang terjebak dalam tabiat menghisap rokok elektronik adalah kekurangan peraturan dan daya tarikan yang ada pada peranti berkenaan.

Tiga alasan utama penggunaan rokok elektronik turut dirumuskan dalam dapatan kaji selidik.

Pertama, kebanyakan responden mengakui rokok elektronik menjadi pilihan kerana tersedia dalam perisa yang digemari.

Kedua, rokok elektronik digemari kononnya wujud persepsi bahawa kurang memudaratkan berbanding tabiat menghisap rokok.

Ketiga, alasan yang kebanyakan responden berikan kerana ia mudah dinikmati.

Berdasarkan kajian yang dija-

lankan mendapati kebanyakan golongan dewasa mengetahui dan pernah mendengar mengenai rokok elektronik.

"Ia meningkat kepada 68 peratus tahun lalu berbanding 21 peratus pada 2011.

"Pengguna rokok elektronik semasa mencatatkan trend peningkatan daripada 0.8 peratus pada 2011 kepada 5.8 peratus pada 2023," menurut dapatan itu yang dijalankan membabitkan 4,269 penduduk Malaysia berusia lingkungan 15 tahun dan ke atas di 289 kawasan. Dapatan penuh kajian GATS Malaysia 2023 dikeluarkan bulan ini.

GATS adalah piawaian global bagi memantau penggunaan tembakau dalam kalangan orang dewasa secara bersestematik serta menjejaki indikator utama kawalan tembakau.

Tinjauan itu dijalankan hasil kolaborasi KKM dengan kerjasama Pertubuhan Kesihatan Sedunia (WHO) serta Pusat Pencegahan dan Kawalan Penyakit (CDC) Amerika Syarikat (AS).

Matlamat kajian antaranya menentukan prevalens berkenaan penggunaan tembakau dan penggunaan rokok elektrik.

Sebelum ini, terdapat lima pertubuhan bukan kerajaan (NGO) menyerahkan petisyen kepada Perdana Menteri, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim bagi menyokong usaha kerajaan membentangkan Rang Undang-Undang (RUU) Kawalan Produk Merokok Demi Kesihatan Awam 2023.

Lima NGO itu terdiri Ikram Health, Malaysian Green Lung Association, Medical MythBusters Malaysia, Majlis Kawalan

LONJAKAN YANG MERISAUKAN



Tembakau Malaysia dan Akademi Profesor Malaysia.

Langkah diambil memandangkan masalah merokok tidak dapat dibendung secara berkesan lagi di bawah Akta Makanan dan Peraturan-Peraturan Kawalan Hasil Tembakau yang sedia ada, dengan membentangkan RUU Kawalan Produk Merokok Demi Kesihatan Awam 2023 atau RUU Generasi Penamat (GEG).

Saranan itu dibuat selepas penangguhan pembentangan RUU

GEG bagi bacaan kali kedua pada 10 Oktober tahun lalu, sehingga mencetuskan persoalan apakah faktor mendorong ia ditangguhkan.

RUU bertujuan menanganis isu semasa kawalan tembakau dan penggunaan vape ketika ini, selain melarang penjualan serta penggunaan sebarang bentuk bahan merokok, termasuk rokok elektronik kepada individu dilahirkan pada 1 Januari 2007 dan tahun seterusnya.

'Haramkan rokok elektronik, selamatkan generasi muda'

Georgetown: Hanya dengan mengharamkan vape atau rokok elektronik, mampu menyelamatkan generasi masa depan negara ini daripada terus bergantung kepada pengambilan dan ketagihan nikotin.

Pegawai Pendidikan Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang (CAP) yang juga aktivis anti rokok, NV Subbarow, menegaskan situasi terkini membabitkan penggunaan bahan itu dalam kalangan golongan muda.

Beliau yang aktif menjalankan program kesedaran antirokok di seluruh negara, berkata tambahan pula aduan diterima CAP mengenai kebingungan ibu bapa terhadap anak ketagihan vape dan rokok elektronik (e-rokok) amat menakutkan.

"Ketika beberapa penganjur-

program, guru disiplin turut meluahkan kesal kerana murid perempuan seawal usia sekolah rendah sudah tidak takut dan malu bagi mengambil vape di kawasan awam.

"Mereka mendapat maklumat bahawa bahan itu mudah diperolehi menerusi pembelian dalam talian dengan pelbagai perisa buah-buahan, sekali gus berharap supaya kerajaan segera mengharamkan segala kaedah penjualannya.

"Kempen haramkan rokok dan vape pada hari ini tidak cukup, perlu ada poster atau gambar yang menunjukkan keburukan serta kesan sebenar daripada pengambilannya," katanya di sini, semalam.

Sebelum ini, CAP melaporkan mengenai kebanyakan penghi-

sap vape dan rokok adalah terdiri daripada kanak-kanak seawal usia lapan tahun selain remaja 13 tahun.

Gubal akta lebih ketat

Dilaporkan bahawa tiga juta individu bergelar penghisap vape

dengan lima juta perokok yang mana majoritinya terdiri daripada kanak-kanak dan remaja.

Mengulas lanjut, Subbarow berkata, penggabulan Rang Undang-Undang (RUU) Generasi Penamat Rokok (GEG) amat penting kerana semakin kerajaan berle-

ngah, lebih ramai kanak-kanak dan belia akan ketagihan.

Ia berikutan kebanyakan produk vape termasuk nikotin berikutan ketagihan dengan cecair toksik serta penyebab kerosakan pada paru-paru.

"GEG adalah penyelamat nyawa anak-anak dan belia seiring dengan keperluan negara terhadap generasi masa depan yang sihat.

"Semakin kita berlegh, kita akan lihat lebih ramai kanak-kanak dan belia yang ketagihan di jalanan," katanya lagi.

Berdasarkan kajian CAP pada awal tahun sehingga Mei tahun lalu mendapati 3,000 daripada 5,000 pelajar seluruh negara termasuk kolej, IPT mengaku mengambil vape dengan 75 peratus asalnya bukanlah perokok.

GEG adalah penyelamat nyawa anak-anak dan belia seiring dengan keperluan negara terhadap generasi masa depan yang sihat

NV Subbarow,
Pegawai Pendidikan CAP



AKHBAR : SINAR HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 13
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Penyakit mulut dimasukkan dalam agenda NCD global

PUTRAJAYA - Penyakit mulut bakal menjadi keutamaan dan dimasukkan ke dalam agenda penyakit tidak berjangkit (NCD) yang baharu pada Mesyuarat Peringkat Tertinggi Keempat Pertubuhan Bangsa-Bangsa Bersatu Mengenai NCD 2025.

Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) dalam kenyataan pada Jumaat memaklumkan, ia antara topik perbincangan yang diutarakan dalam program 'Kesihatan Mulut: Masa untuk Komitmen dan Bertindak' yang bertemakan penentuan dan pengukuran kejayaan Pelan Tindakan Kesihatan Mulut Global (GOHAP) 2023-2030, diadakan sempena Perhimpunan Kesihatan Sedunia (WHA) kali ke-77 di Geneva.

"Penekanan komitmen politik negara anggota terhadap kesihatan mulut serta mempercepat peluasan usaha mencegah dan mengawal penyakit mulut bersama NCD lain amat penting bagi melaksanakan dasar kesihatan mulut global, memantap-

kan dasar kesihatan mulut nasional serta menggerakkan pihak berkepentingan di luar sektor kesihatan mulut.

"Kemajuan menuju liputan perlindungan kesihatan sejagat (UHC) untuk kesihatan mulut menjelang 2030 bergantung pada kemampuan dan kesediaan kementerian kesihatan negara anggota dan pihak berkepentingan lain dalam menyelaraskan, bekerjasama dan mengintegrasikan usaha ini," kata KKM.

Malaysia membentangkan pengalaman dan kejayaan dalam melaksanakan serta memantau pencapaian GOHAP 2023-2030 kepada komuniti global selain turut membincangkan kaedah inovatif untuk menilai pelaksanaan, pengukuran kejayaan dan hala tuju untuk menggembelng pihak berkepentingan di luar sektor kesihatan mulut.

"Menerusi sesi interaktif ini, tindakan, konsep, idea pelaksanaan dan pemantauan pencapaian GOHAP antara negara anggota dibincangkan sebagai persiapan menuju Mesyuarat Kesihatan Mulut

Global yang buat julung kalinya dianjurkan oleh Pertubuhan Kesihatan Dunia (WHO) di Thailand pada November 2024," ujar KKM.

Untuk rekod, Malaysia melancarkan Dasar Kesihatan Pergigian Kebangsaan dan pelan strategiknya selaras dengan inisiatif global pada tahun 2023.

Sejumlah 18 tindakan nasional ke arah mempertingkatkan UHC bagi kesihatan pergigian dilaksanakan di seluruh negara selaras dengan enam objektif strategik GOHAP, antaranya meliputi aspek tadbir urus kesihatan pergigian, promosi dan pencegahan penyakit serta penjagaan kesihatan pergigian.

"Malaysia beriltizam melaksanakan agenda kesihatan mulut global menerusi libat urus dengan pelbagai pihak berkepentingan dari sektor awam, swasta, badan bukan kerajaan dan pemain industri demi mencapai status kesihatan mulut rakyat yang terbaik," kata KKM.
- Bernama

AKHBAR : SINAR HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 20
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Pengeluar, penjual sanggup
jual peralatan perubatan
tidak berdaftar demi kaut
untung besar

Oleh HISYAMUDDIN AYUB
SHAH ALAM

Demi mengaut keuntungan besar, terdapat sebilangan penjual dan pengeluar peranti perubatan tergamak mempertaruhkan keselamatan pelanggan hingga mengandungi kecederaan, kemudaratan serta maut.

Peranti perubatan ialah produk yang digunakan untuk tujuan perubatan dalam diagnosis, terapi dan pembedahan.

Berdasarkan siasatan dan tindakan yang dilaksanakan Pihak Berkuasa Peranti Perubatan (MDA), Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM), sebilangan pihak melibatkan pembuat, wakil sah serta pengedar peranti perubatan telah dikesan masih gagal mendaftarkan produk masing-masing.

Tindakan ini dipercayai bagi menjimatkan kos urusan pendaftaran produk terbahut sekali gus pulangan jualan mampu diperolehi berlipat ganda.

Bukan itu sahaja, ada pihak yang berani menyeludup masuk peranti tersebut dengan mengisytiharkan kononnya sebagai kegunaan peribadi, biarpun hakikatnya untuk dijual kerana mendapat permintaan.

Ketua Eksekutif MDA, Dr Muralitharan Paramasua berkata, tindakan mahu berjimat serta tidak mengeluarkan kos untuk urusan pendaftaran dengan MDA merupakan perbuatan keterlaluan dan tidak beretika kerana ia sebenarnya mengandungi bahaya besar kepada pengguna.

"Mereka ini mahu mengaut keuntungan besar dengan membuat tindakan atas nama penjimatan kos biarpun ini sebenarnya mempertaruhkan keselamatan pengguna."

"Tanpa mendaftarkan produk dengan MDA, tahap keselamatan sesuatu produk peranti perubatan tidak akan dapat dipastikan dan disahkan selamat untuk digunakan," katanya kepada *Sinar Harian*, baru-baru ini.

Dr Muralitharan berkata, sememangnya terdapat sedikit kos yang perlu dikeluarkan oleh pembuat atau wakil sah pe-

Peranti murah bahayakan nyawa



FOTO: HISYAMUDDIN AYUB

Dr Muralitharan (dua dari kanan) menunjukkan kanta lekap yang dirampas oleh MDA menerusi serbuan di Lembah Klang, baru-baru ini.

ranti perubatan untuk mendaftarkan produk masing-masing dengan MDA.

Jelas beliau, selain kos pendaftaran, terdapat juga kos permohonan yang perlu disediakan oleh pihak penyedia peranti perubatan.

Kata beliau, perkara itu adalah satu peraturan yang dilaksanakan oleh hampir semua negara di seluruh dunia demi memastikan tahap keselamatan dan keberterjaminan kepada pengguna.

“Tanpa mendaftarkan produk dengan MDA, tahap keselamatan sesuatu produk peranti perubatan tidak akan dapat dipastikan dan disahkan selamat untuk digunakan.”

- Dr Muralitharan Paramasua



Sesi perbincangan dengan pihak industri peranti perubatan menjadi rutin Dr Muralitharan (kanan).

"Selain perlu mendaftar dengan MDA bagi mendapatkan lesen penubuhan syarikat, pihak pembuat atau wakil syarikat peranti perubatan perlu menjalani proses audit.

"Proses pengauditan perlu dijalankan oleh Badan Penilaian Pematuhan bagi mendapatkan pensijilan sistem pengurusan kualiti sama ada Amalan Pengedaran Baik bagi Peranti Perubatan (GDPMD) atau ISO13485," ujarnya.

Beliau memberitahu, badan penilaian pematuhan iaitu Badan Penilai Pematuhan (CAB) akan melakukan audit bagi proses pengesahan produk, se-

terusnya menyediakan laporan kepada pihak MDA.

Menurutnya lagi, audit itu melibatkan ujian keberkesanan klinikal terhadap produk peranti perubatan yang mahu dipasarkan di negara ini.

Tambahnya, ujian tersebut juga membolehkan aspek teknikal, penggunaan label serta arahan penggunaan terhadap produk yang akan dijual kepada orang ramai.

"Terdapat empat kelas peranti perubatan iaitu Kelas A (berisiko rendah), Kelas B (berisiko sederhana rendah), Kelas C (berisiko sederhana tinggi) serta



AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES
MUKA SURAT : 8
RUANGAN : NEWS / NATION

2023 REPORT

APPEAL TO YOUTH IS DRIVING E-CIG USE

Largest group of vapers aged 15 to 24,
Global Adult Tobacco Survey shows

QISTINA SALLEHUDDIN
KUALA LUMPUR
news@nst.com.my

THE lack of regulation and the appeal to youth are among factors driving the use of e-cigarettes in the country, the 2023 Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) revealed.

The global survey, which in-

involved 4,269 Malaysians aged 15 and above and covered 289 areas nationwide, revealed that the highest percentage of e-cigarette users were in the 15-to-24 age group, at 8.6 per cent.

"The second highest are those aged 25 to 44 years, with 7.1 per cent, followed by 45 to 64 years (2.8 per cent) and 65 and above (0.7 per cent)."

GATS is a global standard sur-

vey designed to systematically monitor adult tobacco use and track key tobacco control indicators. The survey has been conducted twice, once in 2011 and again in 2023.

The survey is conducted by the Institute for Public Health under the Health Ministry, in collaboration with the World Health Organisation and the United States Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.

The survey found that most adults in the country were aware of e-cigarettes, increasing to 69 per cent last year from 21 per cent

in 2011.

E-cigarette users in the country also increased from 0.8 per cent in 2011 to 5.8 per cent last year.

"Meanwhile, the dual users of tobacco and e-cigarettes increased to 3.9 per cent last year from 0.8 per cent in 2011," the report said.

The survey revealed that the top three reasons for using e-cigarettes were the availability of likeable flavours, the perception of e-cigarettes as less harmful than smoking and the ease of use.

A total of 4.8 million adults in

Malaysia, or 19.5 per cent, reported current tobacco use in any form, involving 36.2 per cent of men and 1.8 per cent of women.

"In total, 19 per cent of adults currently smoked tobacco (35.7 per cent of men and 1.5 per cent of women).

"Simultaneously, 14.6 per cent (3.7 million) of adults currently smoked tobacco daily (27.2 per cent of men and 1.4 per cent of women).

"Overall, 16.8 per cent of adults (31.9 per cent of men and 0.9 per cent of women) currently smoke cigarettes."

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 5
RUANGAN : NATION

'It's about national interest'

PETALING JAYA: Since about 30% of registered specialists in the country come from the parallel pathway programme, the Malaysian Medical Council (MMC) must recognise the role it has played in increasing the number of specialists, says former health minister Tan Sri Dr S. Subramaniam.

There are two specialist training programmes available for doctors, namely Master's programmes provided by public universities and the parallel pathway programme that is certified by the Royal Colleges representing different specialities, mainly from the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States.

Training for both is conducted

in public hospitals and university hospitals here.

Doctors who cannot enter a Master's programme for various reasons would take up the parallel pathway programme to qualify as specialists.

Dr Subramaniam said any concern about maintaining standards could be resolved by agreeing to the National Postgraduate Curriculum and strictly adhering to it.

"I hope the proposed amendments to the Medical Act 1971 will address any loopholes that make it difficult for the MMC to accord recognition to the parallel pathways," Dr Subramaniam said when contacted.

"By addressing these legal constraints, if any, qualifications pro-

vided by the Royal Colleges can be listed as recognised postgraduate qualifications by the MMC," he added.

Dr Subramaniam said both forms of specialist training appeal to different groups of doctors as per their personal inclinations.

"As a result of the presence of both pathways, more doctors are able to become specialists. In many ways, that fulfils a national need.

"I hope that the members of the MMC will collectively put the national interest at heart and assist in resolving this current situation," he said, adding that having alternatives could only be good for the country.

He said prior to 1973, specialists

Live Smart. KNOW YOUR POWER



Switch off the unused lights and use natural light during the day to do your daily activities.



working in government hospitals were accredited by the Royal Colleges as Master's programmes only began that year.

"The (first such) Master's programme was started by Universiti Malaya in 1973 and subsequently

other public universities started their own programmes. At present, there are more than 20 Master's programmes conducted by local universities.

> TURN TO PAGE 6

Power over parallel pathway plan

Ministry may be given authority over MMC to resolve specialist training issue

By RAGANANTHINI VETHASALAM
raga@thestar.com.my

PETALING JAYA: The Health Ministry may be given more clout in conducting and recognising specialist training programmes to deal with the parallel pathway conflict, say sources.

This could be done through amendments to the Medical Act 1971.

"The Health Ministry is in charge of about 75% of patients and beds in the country, so it is only right if it has certain powers over it," said a ministry source.

The source added that there is a possibility that the Health Minister would be given "clearer powers" to veto Malaysian Medical Council (MMC) decisions if there is any conflict, and to enable certain checks and balances on the council.

"There was also talk about reforming the MMC in terms of tenure, voting, elections and representation, but that has not been confirmed," said the source.

The proposals are being fine-tuned as feedback is being sought from other agencies including the Attorney General's Chambers.

"Some weaknesses were identified in existing Master's pro-



Full house: The situation in Hospital Kuala Lumpur is chaotic, with people rushing to counters and waiting in long queues, some even waiting in corridors. This highlights the staff shortage at government hospitals.
— ART CHEN/
The Star

grammes in a study," said the source.

The source believed that universities may not be too keen on the parallel pathway programme as it may affect their own Master's programmes.

Meanwhile, another source claimed the fiasco related to the recognition of the Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh in the Cardiothoracic Surgery (RCSEd) programme

came about due to an oversight in the past as the programme was not recognised outside the United Kingdom.

On May 27, Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said the Medical Act 1971 will be amended to resolve issues related to the parallel pathway programme.

He also said the Cabinet paper on the programme would be presented for approval at the Cabinet

meeting on June 5.

In March, he told the Dewan Rakyat that there were only 14 cardiothoracic surgeons working under his ministry.

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

Some of the above cardiothoracic surgeons will also be

retiring soon.

Malaysian graduates who had been sent by the government to study cardiothoracic surgery at the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh are unable to practise in Malaysia as their qualifications are not accepted by the MMC. In response, the MMC said it had never recognised the RCSEd programme.

Four of these graduates have already sued the MMC for refusing to register them with the National Specialist Register (NSR).

This was the third known lawsuit against the MMC's rejection of NSR specialist registration applications.

The other two lawsuits were filed by a neurosurgeon with FRCS Ireland in neurosurgery and by six pathology graduates in medical genetics from Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM).

On May 29, Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir said that there are two issues to be resolved, namely the recognition of the cardiothoracic parallel pathway programme and the NSR registration of doctors who have completed the programme.

The amendments to the Medical Act are expected to be tabled in the Dewan Rakyat in the upcoming meeting this month.

Healthcare workers stretched to the limit and very tired

PETALING JAYA: The crushing weight on healthcare workers in the country is set to get worse, with a recent informal survey finding that only 5% of healthcare facilities operate with adequate manpower.

Health advocates said this is a telling sign that healthcare workers may not be able to cope for long.

Referring to the findings of an ad hoc poll by the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) concerning house officers, medical officers and specialists, Hartal Doktor Kontrak spokesman Dr Muhammad Yassin said the activist group had

predicted this years ago.

"Almost all healthcare facilities are operating with insufficient staff, pushing their capacity to the limit. This will inevitably lead to burnout and resignations, and exacerbate existing problems," he said when contacted.

Dr Muhammad said there has been a lack of action to address issues related to poor working conditions and mistreatment of junior doctors by superiors.

Therefore, he said, it was time for a Health Commission to be established so that the Health Ministry can manage its own manpower needs.

"Currently, too much time is

being wasted on resolving simple issues. For instance, consider the ongoing debates surrounding the parallel pathway fiasco, while the myCPD (Online Monitoring Continuing Professional Development) website has been down for months," he added.

Independent healthcare advocate and former contract doctor Dr Sean Thum said while 117 respondents is a very small sample size, which may not represent the actual situation in its entirety, it at least gives a snapshot of what was currently going on.

"These are warning signs that healthcare workers are finding it

hard to cope due to a lack of manpower.

"The Health Ministry has to be transparent about the number of healthcare workers at facilities nationwide, to ensure that proper remedies can be taken early," he said.

Dr Thum said the lack of manpower will lead to physical exhaustion and subsequently burnout among healthcare workers.

"This will be detrimental to patients as tired healthcare workers are prone to making mistakes. This translates to poorer healthcare outcomes," he added.

The survey received a total of 117 responses from workers in various government healthcare facilities, including hospitals and health clinics across the country.

Participants in the survey were from Sabah (20), Sarawak (19), Johor (14), Kedah (13), Perak (10), nine each from Negri Sembilan, Penang and Selangor, Kuala Lumpur (seven), Pahang (four), Terengganu (two) and one from Perlis.

As for the factors contributing to the lack of manpower, nearly half (48.3%) of the 117 respondents said doctors were quitting (28.8%) or being transferred to another facility (13.6%).

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 6
RUANGAN : NATION

Dr Subra: Future of parallel pathway now dependent on MMC



> FROM PAGE 5

"Prior to 2012, there was no legal process in place to recognise and register specialists.

"However, we did have a robust system for accrediting and recognising undergraduate qualifications for the purpose of registration as medical officers with the MMC.

"As a response to a longstanding request from the medical fraternity, the Medical Act was amended in 2012 to allow for the creation of the National Specialist Register (NSR).

"The amendments came into effect in 2017 after they were properly gazetted," Dr Subramaniam (pic) added.

After 2017, only doctors in the NSR could call themselves spe-

cialists. This led to the creation of a list of recognised postgraduate qualifications by the MMC.

"Over time, the qualifications provided by the Royal Colleges came to be known as the parallel pathway," said Dr Subramaniam, who served as health minister from 2013 to 2018.

He said the current controversy over the recognition of the parallel pathway programme was triggered by some members of the MMC questioning the legitimacy of the programme and its long-term necessity.

"Among the reasons given was that the parallel pathway programme did not fulfil the legal requirements of the Medical Act," he said.

"There have been aspersions as to the quality of those who

qualified through the parallel pathway.

"To address this, there was an initiative by the Deans Council to create a National Postgraduate Curriculum to standardise the training under the two programmes.

"The initiative, which began in 2014, led to the creation of the National Postgraduate Curriculum for 12 specialities.

"By implementing this curriculum, we can ensure broad standardisation between the two programmes.

"Both these programmes have been complementing each other in producing specialists for our country," said Dr Subramaniam.

"The large number of doctors who became specialists through the parallel pathway over the

many decades and served the nation well, stand testimony to the quality of the programme. The MMC is the custodian of the NSR and maintains the list of postgraduate qualifications," he added.

Dr Subramaniam said the future of the parallel pathway is now dependent on the MMC.

Khairy Jamaluddin, who was health minister from 2021 to 2022, said in his *Keluar Sekelap* podcast recently that the Health Minister, the Higher Education Minister, and the Health director-general must resolve the problem.

It has gone on long enough and left many doctors who have done the parallel pathway programme stuck in limbo, he added.

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 12
RUANGAN : NATION

Dengue cases down, four deaths reported

PUTRAJAYA: The reported number of dengue fever cases dropped to 2,426 in the 21st Epidemiological Week (ME21) from May 19 to May 25, compared with 2,461 cases the previous week.

Health director-general Datuk Dr Muhammad Radzi Abu Hassan said four deaths due to complications from dengue fever were also recorded during the period.

"There were 46 deaths due to complications from dengue fever reported compared with 31 fatalities for the same period in 2023," he said in a statement yesterday, Bernama reported.

He added that the number of hotspots reported in ME21 was 63 compared with 59 localities in the previous week.