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Nurse fulfils dream of becoming lecturer

KUALA LUMPUR: When Dr Rashidah Mohd Yusoff first put on a nurse's uniform after obtaining her nursing diploma in 2009, she never imagined that one day she would be standing in front of a classroom, teaching future nurses and healthcare professionals.

Through dedication and a drive to further her studies, the 35-year-old mother of two now holds a PhD in nursing and has taken on the responsibility of training student nurses.

Rashidah is currently a lecturer at the Kulliyah of Nursing, International Islamic University Malaysia's Kuantan campus in Pahang.

She initially believed she would remain a nurse until retirement, unaware that pursuing higher academic qualifications could open new doors for career advancement in the field.

A turning point came in 2017, when she enrolled in a post-basic orthopaedic nursing course.

"One of my tutors then was Norliza Kadir, who was pursuing a master's degree in orthopaedic nursing. That was when I first learned that there are master's and even PhD programmes in nursing," Rashidah said.

"Actually, while growing up, I never thought of

becoming a nurse. Like other children, my childhood ambition was to be a doctor, lawyer or lecturer. So when I found out about the master's and PhD courses for nurses, I saw the opportunity to revive my dream of becoming a lecturer."

Recounting how she first entered the profession, Rashidah said, after completing matriculation she received an offer to study at Universiti Malaysia Sabah, but turned it down due to financial constraints as her family was not well off.

To help ease the burden, she opted for a three-year diploma course in nursing at Kolej Damansara Utama in Selangor as it guaranteed employment upon graduation. The course also came with an allowance.

After receiving her diploma in 2009, she worked as a nurse at several hospitals, including Hospital Sultan Ahmad Shah in Temerloh and Hospital Bera in Triang, both in Pahang.

In 2017, she pursued a Bachelor of Nursing at Universiti Teknologi MARA, and in 2020, she continued her studies through a fast-track PhD programme.

Her doctoral thesis focused on hip fractures among the elderly. — Bernama



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Call for strategic solutions to prevent medicine wastage

► Careless disposal hurts environment and increases cost burden on govt: Expert

■ BY DEEPALAKSHMI MANICKAM
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PETALING JAYA: The startling revelation of vast amounts of unused medication has shaken the healthcare community, prompting urgent calls for a coordinated and strategic action plan from experts.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia public health medicine specialist Prof Dr Sharifa Ezat Wan Puteh highlighted the need to strengthen patient education, upgrade healthcare IT systems and empower pharmacists to take a more active role in addressing the issue.

"Patients must understand the importance of completing their treatment and the risks of improper use or storage, which can lead to complications or drug resistance," she told *theSun*.

Sharifa emphasised that pharmacists should play a bigger role in counselling patients, especially during discharge or when prescribed new medications.

The specialist advocated for expanding access to medication drop-off points beyond clinics and hospitals. She proposed setting them up in shopping malls, community pharmacies and even through mobile collection units.

Rather than punitive measures, she suggested incentivising treatment completion and implementing digital tracking systems to identify patterns of "over-prescribing" or "doctor-hopping."

She cited Australia's National Return and Disposal of Unwanted Medicines programme as an example of success, noting the importance of government support and structured funding in driving change.

"Australia's model proves that with the right backing, change is possible. Malaysia has the framework, but we need a clear strategy and commitment."

Unused medication is not only



Participation in the MyMediSAFE initiative is low, despite collection boxes placed at return centres in 149 government hospitals and 739 private facilities. — ADAM AMIR HAMZAH/THE SUN

wasteful but also presents a significant financial burden and environmental threat, said Sharifa and warned of the risks of improper disposal posed to wildlife and human health. She also said non-adherence to prescribed treatment is a troubling trend.

"The goal isn't for people to return their medications, but to complete their treatment as prescribed."

It was reported that Malaysia's Medication Return Programme (now MyMediSAFE), launched in 2010, aims to safely dispose of unused or expired medications, reducing environmental contamination and combating antimicrobial resistance.

The programme has return centres nationwide at 149 government hospitals and 739 private facilities.

Despite its availability, participation remains low, with many individuals unaware of the

programme or hesitant to return unused medications. Some mistakenly believe expired drugs are still usable, while others fear they may not receive replacements.

From 2015 to 2023, Malaysia spent RM23.25 billion on medicine procurement, underscoring the financial implications of unused medication.

Sharifa said improper disposal, such as flushing medications down toilets or throwing them in bins, further exacerbates environmental risks. Antibiotics entering rivers can disrupt ecosystems, wipe out species and contribute to antimicrobial resistance.

"A 2022 study by CHEM Trust (an NGO that works to protect humans and wildlife from harmful chemicals) revealed pharmaceutical waste in rivers worldwide is harming aquatic life. It not only impacts biodiversity but poses long-term risks

to human health," she said, adding that there are financial consequences to hoarding and improper discarding of medication.

Meanwhile, a study by a Malaysian teaching hospital revealed that over 11,000 units of unused medication worth RM13,594.90 were returned in a single year. Most of these were for cardiovascular, endocrine and musculoskeletal conditions.

Sharifa said if there is an estimated RM100 worth of waste per patient at the return centres, losses would amount to RM88,700 annually.

"That's just returned medicines. The actual loss is far greater." She also emphasised the human cost of non-adherence, which goes beyond wasted medication, adding that patients who fail to complete treatments often face severe health complications that may require expensive interventions later on.

AKHBAR : THE SUN
MUKA SURAT : 2
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Anxiety over economic impact of 24% rate increase

PETALING JAYA: The US tariff hike on Malaysian exports has ignited concerns among the people, with many fearing its long-term effects on businesses, employment and consumer costs.

As Malaysia contemplates the fallout from the tariff increase, the public is calling for a clear and strategic response.

When *theSun* reached out for reactions, the majority of those interviewed expressed anxiety over the potential economic impact.

Yuvanisha Suppiah, a final-year degree student and part-time forex trader, voiced concerns about the 24% tariff on Malaysia's electronics exports.

"Higher tariffs could reduce demand for local electronics such as semiconductors and solar panels, hurting manufacturers and potentially leading to job losses in the electrical and electronic sector."

As a trader, Yuvanisha is worried about the volatility of the ringgit against the US dollar.

She fears the tariff hike would weaken the ringgit further, raising import costs and increasing the cost of living for ordinary Malaysians.

"I'm closely monitoring the ringgit-dollar volatility. While it creates trading opportunities, the risks are high," she said, adding that fresh graduates might also face stiffer competition for jobs in affected industries.

Elvina Lucia, a 25-year-old paralegal, echoed the concerns, emphasising Malaysia's heavy reliance on exports, particularly electronics.

"If demand drops, it could hurt jobs and businesses here. The tariff hike would hit factory revenues, leading to layoffs and job losses, which could directly impact local families.

"If the ringgit weakens and import costs rise, we'll end up paying more for everyday items."

Civil servant Suhirley Arfiza Khalil, 51, highlighted the burden that rising costs would



If the ringgit weakens and import costs rise, Malaysians would end up paying more for everyday items.

— ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THE SUN

place on consumers.

"Even with higher wages, the cost of goods keeps climbing, making salary increases feel irrelevant. The tariff hike would strain household finances, pushing up prices for basic goods and services."

Suhirley suggested that the government

should focus on strengthening local industries through Technical and Vocational Education and Training-produced goods.

"We should harness the expertise and capabilities of our local talent, exporting goods globally and reducing reliance on imports."

— By QIRANA NABILLA MOHD RASHIDI