

COMMENT by Musa Mohd Nordin and Dr Naveen Nair Gangadaran

Safer, smarter vaccine to stop dengue deaths

AS we analyse the dengue statistics for 2024, the numbers are a stark wake-up call.

With 122,423 cases and 117 deaths – a 17% rise in fatalities – it is evident that our current strategies are being outpaced by the virus.

Malaysia has set an ambitious target of zero dengue deaths by 2030 but we will not reach this goal if we rely on vector control alone.

The mosquitoes are adapting and so must we. However, the most effective tool in our arsenal – vaccination – remains clouded by the past.

We must address the elephant in the room. Malaysia's hesitation

towards dengue vaccines is rooted in the experience with the first-generation vaccine (CYD-TDV).

The first vaccine (CYD-TDV) was a good vaccine but it came with a serious problem – for people who had never had dengue before, it could sometime make a future dengue infection worse.

This major safety concern limited its use and made regulatory authorities and doctors understandably cautious. But science does not stand still. Allowing that "legacy fear" to block access to new, safer technology today is a disservice to public health.

The new live-attenuated vaccine, TAK-003 (QDenga), has fundamentally changed the safety equation. Unlike its predecessor, TAK-003 does not have the previous safety problem.

In extensive clinical trials spanning seven years, there has been no evidence of increased disease severity or hospitalisations in individuals who have never had dengue (seronegative).

The data is robust: across 4.5 years of primary doses and subsequent booster studies, the vaccine has served as a shield against severe dengue disease leading to hospitalisation, not a risk.

This vaccine is already approved in 41 countries, with over 21 million doses distributed worldwide. Real-world data, including from Brazil, confirms its effectiveness in preventing severe dengue outcomes.

For parents and working adults, this offers peace of mind without the need for complex pre-screening blood tests. It shifts the focus from merely "avoiding mosquitoes" to actively preventing severe dengue disease that overwhelms our hospitals and claims lives.

The question facing Malaysia is no longer whether we should trust dengue vaccination but whether we

can afford not to when lives are at stake.

Caution is a virtue in medicine but when caution ignores seven years of safety and efficacy data, it becomes an obstruction.

We urge the public and policymakers to look at the new evidence with fresh eyes. Let us rebuild trust through science and ensure that by 2030, "zero dengue deaths" is a reality, not just a slogan.

Dr Musa Mohd Nordin and Dr Naveen Nair Gangadaran are from the Malaysian Paediatric Association. Comments: letters@thesundaily.com

Kelantan Health Dept screening for Nipah virus

KOTA BARU: The Kelantan Health Department has implemented health screening at the state's entry points as a preventive measure to curb the potential spread of the Nipah virus.

Its director Datuk Dr Mohd Azman Yacob said the precautionary step aims to detect any risk of imported Nipah virus cases, particularly involving individuals arriving from India.

He said screening operations have been conducted over the

past week at the Rantau Panjang Immigration, Customs, Quarantine and Security (ICQS) Complex, the Bukit Bunga ICQS in Tanah Merah and the Pengkalan Kubor ICQS in Tumpat.

"A total of 120 health personnel, including medical officers, assistant environmental health officers and nurses, have been deployed at these entry points to conduct screenings, including body temperature scans.

"Individuals identified as high-

risk will undergo interviews and further screening," he told reporters after launching the state-level "Sihat Itu Saya" programme here yesterday, Bernama reported.

Dr Mohd Azman said similar screening measures are also being carried out at Sultan Ismail Petra Airport, particularly involving passengers on direct flights from Singapore to Kota Baru.

"For passengers arriving from KL International Airport, screening has already been conducted

by officers from the Health Ministry. At the state level, we are focusing on direct international flights," he said.

According to media reports, India's Ministry of Health has confirmed two cases of infection in West Bengal, with the World Health Organisation categorising the virus as a zoonotic disease that can be transmitted from animals to humans, as well as through contaminated food and human-to-human contact.

Stepping up progress on public healthcare

Hanifah: Sarawak's health matters pending 'highest-level' discussion, all parties working to resolve issues



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KUCHING: Progress pertaining to Sarawak's healthcare in line with the Malaysia Agreement 1963 (MA63) awaits discussion at the highest-level meeting, said Deputy Health Minister Datuk Hanifah Hajar Taib.

She said depending on whether they pertain to policy issues or specific matters, these matters are currently being discussed at the committee level.

"There is also coordination between Sabah, Sarawak, and the federal government regarding the information to be presented and the best ways to address them," she said.

She was met after officiating at the Darul Hana Bridge lighting-up ceremony at the Kuching Waterfront on Saturday night, in conjunction with World Cancer Day 2026.

On Jan 7, Deputy Premier Datuk Amar Dr Sim Kui Hian called for the inclusion of senior representatives from the Finance Ministry, Economic Planning Unit, and Public Service Department into the technical committee under the MA63 Implementation Action Council to resolve longstanding healthcare challenges and end bureaucratic delays.

Regarding this matter, Hanifah said the suggestion needed to be presented to the technical committee ahead of any feedback on the matter being made public.

Furthermore, she urged that vital feedback related to the state's healthcare be relayed to



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Datuk Hanifah Hajar Taib

her ministry.

"Following that, what I can do is gather the information, discuss it at the highest level within the ministry, and try to find the best possible solution," she said.

Commenting on the recent Cabinet reshuffle placing her in the Health Ministry, Hanifah said she received the appointment with honour and gratitude, despite it being midway through the cabinet's term.

"However, do not expect me to know everything, especially when it comes to medical matters – I will need to learn as well.

"But I will focus on administrative priorities and on finding solutions in a thorough and comprehensive manner. As long as we work together, we can achieve our objectives," she said.

JKNK rampas kosmetik timbang kilo bernilai RM55,213

Kota Bharu: Jabatan Kesihatan Negeri Kelantan (JKNK) merampas sebanyak 2.055 kosmetik tidak bernotifikasi dengan nilai rampasan berjumlah RM55,213 sepanjang tahun lalu.

Pengarahnya, Datuk Dr Mohd Azman Yacob berkata, dalam tempoh sebulan pertama tahun ini, sebanyak 66 kosmetik tidak bernotifikasi dirampas de-

ngan nilai rampasan berjumlah RM1,060.

Katanya, pihaknya memandang serius penjualan kosmetik timbang dan akan mempergiatkan penguatkuasaan termasuk bekerjasama dengan agensi lain seperti Kementerian Perdagangan Dalam Negeri dan Kos Sara Hidup (KPDN) bagi memastikan penjualan produk berkenaan dapat dikurangkan

ke tahap minimum di Kelantan.

Beliau berkata, penjualan kosmetik secara timbang melanggar Akta Jualan Dadah 1952 dan peraturan-peraturan kawalan kosmetik 1984 yang boleh mengundang risiko serius kepada kesihatan pengguna.

"Kosmetik yang dijual secara timbang kebiasaannya tidak mematuhi pe-

raturan ditetapkan kerana dijual tanpa label lengkap termasuk maklumat pengilang, nombor notifikasi daripada Pihak Berkuasa Kawalan Dadah (NPRA), tarikh luput serta senarai bahan kandungan," katanya.

"Apabila produk dijual tanpa label dan maklumat lengkap, pengguna sebenarnya membeli tanpa mengetahui risiko

sebenar. Malah disebabkan harganya murah, orang ramai membeli pelbagai jenis kosmetik termasuk gincu dan produk pemutih tanpa mengambil kira keselamatan," katanya.

Beliau berkata demikian kepada pemberita selepas merasmikan Majlis Peluncuran Program Sihat Itu Saya di Gelanggang Tennis, Padang Perdana Kota Bha-

ru, di sini semalam.

Katanya lagi, kebanyakan produk pemutih muka murah yang dijual secara timbang bersifat mengahkis, sekali gus boleh merosakkan kulit dan sel.

"Produk sebegini bertindak mengurangkan atau mematikan sel melanosit, iaitu sel yang berfungsi menghasilkan pigmen melanin dalam kulit," katanya.

ELAK PENULARAN VIRUS NIPAH

Petugas kesihatan di 3 pintu masuk ICQS

Kota Bharu: Jabatan Kesihatan Negeri Kelantan (JKNK) menempatkan petugas kesihatan di tiga pintu masuk Kompleks Imigresen, Kastam, Kuarantin dan Keselamatan (ICQS) bagi menjalankan saringan kesihatan ke atas individu memasuki Kelantan sebagai langkah pencegahan mengelakkan penularan virus Nipah.

Pengarahnya, Datuk Dr Mohd Azman Yacob berkata, langkah di ICQS Rantau Panjang, Bukit Bunga dan Pengkalan Kubor dilaksanakan sejak seminggu lalu susulan pengumuman oleh Kementerian Ke-

sihatan Malaysia (KKM).

Katanya, seramai kira-kira 120 petugas kesihatan termasuk pegawai perubatan, penolong pegawai kesihatan persekitaran dan jururawat ditugaskan di tiga pintu masuk ICQS secara giliran sepanjang waktu operasi.

"Saringan dijalankan ketika ini adalah seperti saringan biasa iaitu imbasan suhu badan. Namun, sekiranya ada individu dari negara selain negara jiran seperti Thailand, kita akan menjalankan temu bual serta saringan yang lebih terperinci ke atas individu berkenaan," katanya.

Produk kecantikan tidak dibenarkan itu dijual secara terbuka di tepi jalan, khemah sementara serta platform dalam talian

Oleh ADILA SHARINNI WAHID

KOTA BHARU - Jualan produk kosmetik murah yang dijual secara timbang kilo di-jangka meningkat di negeri ini menjelang Ramadan dan Aidilfitri.

Pengarah Kesihatan Negeri Kelantan, Datuk Dr Mohd Azman Yacob berkata, trend itu lazimnya berlaku setiap tahun terutama dalam tempoh dua minggu terakhir sebelum Aidilfitri apabila pelbagai produk kecantikan

dijual secara terbuka di tepi jalan, khemah sementara selain platform dalam talian.

Menurut beliau, kosmetik yang dijual secara timbang kilo adalah tidak dibenarkan di bawah Akta Kawalan Dadah dan Kosmetik 1984 serta Peraturan-Peraturan Kawalan Dadah dan Kosmetik 1984 kerana gagal mematuhi keperluan asas yang ditetapkan.

"Produk kosmetik ini biasanya dijual tanpa label lengkap, tidak mempunyai maklumat pengilang, nombor notifikasi daripada Bahagian Regulatori Farmasi Negara, tarikh luput serta senarai bahan kandungan.

"Keadaan ini membimbangkan kerana pengguna membeli produk tersebut tanpa mengetahui risiko sebenar yang boleh menjejaskan kesihatan kulit," katanya ketika ditemui selepas melancarkan Program Sihat Itu Saya di Padang Perdana di sini pada Ahad.

Tahun lalu, operasi penguatkuasaan melibatkan penjualan produk kosmetik tidak bemarket dengan 2,055 item dirampas melibatkan nilai rampasan berjumlah RM55,213 manakala bagi tahun ini sehingga 31 Januari, sebanyak 66 item dirampas dengan nilai rampasan sebanyak RM1,060.

Dr Mohd Azman berkata, antara produk yang sering dijual secara timbang kilo ialah gincu, produk pewarna bibir serta krim pemutih wajah yang disifatkan sebagai paling berbahaya jika digunakan tanpa kawalan.

"Produk pemutih muka ini bersifat meng-



Dr Mohd Azman (dua dari kiri) melancarkan Program Sihat Itu Saya di Kota Bharu pada Ahad.

hakis dan boleh merosakkan lapisan kulit serta sel-sel penting termasuk melanosit yang berfungsi melindungi kulit daripada kerosakan serta risiko kanser kulit.

"Kami lihat ada pengguna yang mengharapkan wajah menjadi putih, tetapi akhirnya mengalami kemerahan melampau, iritasi dan kerosakan kulit jangka panjang," jelasnya.

Sehubungan itu, pihaknya terus mempergiat usaha penguatkuasaan dengan kerjasama agensi berkaitan seperti

Kementerian Perdagangan Dalam Negeri dan Kos Sara Hidup.

Mengulas cabaran penguatkuasaan, Dr Mohd Azman berkata, penjualan kosmetik secara dalam talian turut menjadi kekangan kerana identiti penjual sering tidak dapat dikenal pasti dan berada di luar bidang kuasa segera pihak berkuasa.

"Masyarakat perlu lebih waspada supaya tidak terpengaruh dengan kosmetik murah tanpa kelulusan, sebaliknya mengutamakan keselamatan," tegasnya.

INFO

- Penjualan kosmetik timbang kilo tidak dibenarkan di bawah Akta Kawalan Dadah dan Kosmetik 1984 serta Peraturan-Peraturan Kawalan Dadah dan Kosmetik 1984 kerana gagal mematuhi keperluan asas yang ditetapkan.
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Virus Nipah: Kelantan perketat saringan di pintu sempadan

KOTA BHARU - Jabatan Kesihatan Negeri Kelantan (JKNK) melaksanakan saringan kesihatan ke atas pelancong dan individu yang memasuki negeri ini melalui tiga pintu sempadan negara serta lapangan terbang sebagai langkah berjaga-jaga susulan kes virus Nipah di India.

Pengarah Kesihatan Negeri Kelantan, Datuk Dr Mohd Azman Yacob berkata, pasukan kesihatan ditempatkan di semua pintu masuk utama di Kompleks Imigresen, Kastam, Kuarantin dan Keselamatan (ICQS), dengan petugas menjalankan saringan ke atas individu yang melalui sempadan khususnya dari India.

"Saringan ini bermula sejak diumumkan oleh Kementerian Kira-kira seminggu lalu.

"Secara keseluruhan, seramai 120 petugas kesihatan terlibat dan bertugas secara syif," katanya.

Beliau menjelaskan, petugas ditempatkan di ICQS Rantau Panjang di Pasir Mas, Bukit Bunga di Tanah Merah dan Pengkalan Kubor di Tumpat serta Lapangan Terbang Sultan Ismail Petra bagi melakukan saringan sepanjang waktu operasi pintu masuk.

"Kami menggunakan imbasan suhu secara terma dan bagi individu dari negara selain jiran



Saringan kesihatan dilakukan di pintu masuk sempadan negara di Rantau Panjang.

terdekat, kami turut menjalankan temu bual serta saringan lebih terperinci.

"Saringan dilakukan sepanjang waktu pintu masuk dibuka dan setakat ini belum ada sebarang kes dikesan," jelasnya.

Menurut beliau, setakat ini tiada kes virus Nipah dikesan di negara ini khususnya di Kelantan, namun langkah pencegahan awal diambil bagi mengelakkan penularan penyakit

berjangkit itu ke dalam negara.

Mengulas saringan di lapangan terbang, Dr Mohd Azman berkata, saringan awal ke atas pelancong antarabangsa dilaksanakan di Lapangan Terbang Antarabangsa Kuala Lumpur (KLIA), namun JKNK tetap bersiaga sekiranya terdapat penerbangan antarabangsa terus atau transit melalui negara lain seperti Singapura.