AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 25
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Virus Zika dipantau

» *Jangkitan akibatkan otak bayi menjadi kecil*

Oleh Mohd Iskandar Ibrahim
mohd_iskandar@bh.com.my

Kuala Lumpur

Dr Lokman Hakim Sulaiman

Kementerian Kesihatan kini memantau virus Zika yang disebarkan oleh nyamuk Aedes dan kini dikesan menular di negara Amerika Latin khususnya Brazil.

Timbalan Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan Malaysia (Kesihatan Awam), Datuk Dr Lokman Hakim Sulaiman, berkata virus terbabit boleh menyebabkan bayi baru lahir mengalami sindrom mikrosefali atau otak kecil sekiranya dijangkiti.

"Kementerian melakukan pemantauan secara berterusan bagi mengesan virus Zika di negara ini, melalui ujian yang dilakukan Makmal Kesihatan Awam Kebangsaan, Sungai Buloh (MKAK), klinik dan hospital sentinel negara.

"Sampel daripada pesakit disyaki denggi, dikesan negatif dalam ujian antigen denggi NS1, selain ujian mengesan virus zika. Setakat ini, tiada sampel yang positif terhadap virus berkenaan," katanya dalam satu kenyataan, semalam.

Virus disebar nyamuk Aedes

Dr Lokman berkata, virus Zika disebarkan oleh nyamuk Aedes dan ia adalah vektor yang sama untuk penyakit demam denggi.

"Tidak dinafikan ada risiko virus ini menular ke Malaysia ini dan orang ramai harus mengambil tindakan membersihkan kawasan rumah dan persekitaran setiap minggu supaya bebas daripada tempat pembiakan nyamuk Aedes.

"Persekitaran yang bersih bukan sahaja menghapuskan denggi, malah berupaya menghalang kemunculan virus Zika di negara ini," katanya.

INFO

Virus Zika

- **Mula menular** di negara Afrika dan Asia sejak 2007.
- **Virus** disebarkan nyamuk Aedes.
- **Antara** simptom dijangkiti virus Zika ialah pening, ruam, demam dan sakit belakang.
- **Dikesan** menular di daerah Camacari, Brazil pada April 2015.

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES
MUKA SURAT : 20
RUANGAN : PRIME NEWS

Cars are parked illegally next to the kerb because there is a shortage of parking bays at Kuala Lumpur Hospital. Pic by Chan Wai Yew

Big 'nay' to proposal

KUALA LUMPUR: A proposal to charge for parking at government hospitals has come under heavy criticism from the public.

Many said it would cause more problems for patients.

Mior Noor Azrin of Puncak Alam said a better doctor's appointment system would ease parking problems at public hospitals.

"I think one way to solve the problem is to properly schedule appointments," he said.

He said he was given appointments as early as 8am at government hospitals but he would only get to see the doctor at 2pm or later.

He wanted to know why patients seeing doctors in the afternoon had to come so early and take up parking space.

Fadhli Rozainoor of Subang suggested t a ticketing system be set up to ensure hospitals parking facilities were not abused.

"If the problem is people misusing the facilities, then they should come up with a system where patients can get their parking tickets validated when they pay (for their medical expenses) or have completed their treatment at the hospital, like they do in hotels where you can get a flat rate or sometimes free parking if you are attending an event or staying at the hotel."

Fadhli also suggested free shuttle services from public transport hubs, such as Kuala Lumpur Sentral, KTM Komuter and LRT stations, to hospitals.

He said the parking shortage was also due to the fact that patients and visitors were forced to drive to public hospitals because of the lack of public transport.

On Monday, Deputy Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Hilmi Yahaya told the Dewan Rakyat that the ministry was thinking of charging for parking at select government hospitals.

He had said this was to prevent parking facilities from being used by those who were not there for treatment or to visit anyone.

Sungai Buloh Hospital (HSB) director Datuk Dr Khalid Ibrahim told the *New Straits Times* said he had not received instructions from the ministry to start charging parking fees.

He said HSB, on its own initiative, provided free shuttle service three times a day to and from the nearest KTM station.

However, Dr Khalid said there was a problem involving commuters parking their vehicles at HSB and hitching a ride on the shuttle service or walking to the station.

"There have even been cases where we contacted car owners who had parked their cars for several days at the hospital and discovered they had carpooled with friends to other states and left their cars at the hospital."

Dr Khalid said he had written to the Land Public Transport Commission (SPAD) for public transport to be provided to and from the hospital but had yet to receive a response.

"I have received complaints that taxi drivers don't use meters and charge RM7 per person one-way to the nearest KTM station. That is ridiculous."

Dr Khalid said, to curb this problem, he had allocated a special route for taxi to pick up and drop off patients on condition that they obeyed the law and used their meters.

"The ministry has approved our request for a multilevel parking facility to be built, possibly next year."

Checks at HSB showed that the parking lots were filled by 8.30am and motorists had to park outside the hospital grounds.

Mohd Alauddin Mohd Asnawi, 34, said it would be ridiculous to impose parking fees at hospitals when public transport was not available.

Checks at the Selayang and Kuala Lumpur hospitals, however, showed ample parking there.

A patient at Selayang Hospital said he had never had trouble finding parking spots.

Mohamad Ahmad, 40, said there were enough parking bays for everybody.

"Will the Health Ministry charge per hour or per entry?" he asked when told about the proposal.

Mohamad said charging per hour was a bad idea, as it could take a lot of time for patients to find parking, register, wait for screening, see a doctor and wait to have his prescription filled.

A patient at Kuala Lumpur Hospital, G. Ramesh Gunasegaran, 24, said it would be unfair to charge people who were visiting family members or friends at hospitals.

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES
MUKA SURAT : 20
RUANGAN : PRIME NEWS

No decision on hospital parking fees

BETTER MANAGEMENT: Ministry looking into privatising facilities

FAREZZA HANUM RASHID
KUALA LUMPUR
news@nst.com.my

THE Health Ministry has yet to decide whether to charge for parking at public hospitals in the central zone of the peninsula.

This was confirmed by Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam yesterday.

His statement was in direct contradiction to that of his deputy, Datuk Seri Dr Hilmi Yahaya, who had told the Dewan Rakyat that the ministry had decided on the subject and was offering an open tender to interested companies.

"We have not made a decision, let me correct that. There was only a proposal that we should privatise the management of car parks at some of the hospitals so we can better manage them."

However, he said, Sultanah Aminah Hospital, Johor Baru, had started charging for parking.

"We had to do it because people were parking their cars there for the whole day while they work in Singapore."

Dr Subramaniam said this after opening the Bi-Regional Workshop on Restricting the Marketing of Unhealthy Foods and Non-Alcoholic Beverages to Children in the Western Pacific and Southeast Asia here. Representatives of 19 countries are taking part.

Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam

The Global School-based Student Health Survey in 2012 found that the prevalence of overweight and obesity among Malaysian children aged 13 to 17 were 19.1 per cent and 7.9 per cent, respectively.

"Early interventions to address this are urgently warranted with a strong commitment from all stakeholders, including the food industry," Dr Subramaniam said.

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES
MUKA SURAT : 20
RUANGAN : PRIME NEWS

Minister: Vape ban up to states

KUALA LUMPUR: It is up to state governments to decide whether they want to ban vape, Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam said.

The ministry is waiting for scientific studies to show whether vaping can help smokers kick the habit before considering legislation to ban it. But, some states have already taken steps to address the controversial issue.

Sultan of Johor Sultan Ibrahim Sultan Iskandar had decreed the prohibition of e-cigarette and vape sales in the state from Jan 1. Other states are now thinking about doing the same thing.

The Penang government is reportedly amending by-laws to set up vape-free zones while the Kedah government had asked the state's fatwa committee to come up with a ruling on vape sales.

"It is up to state governments to implement the rules. At the federal level, the ministry follows the cabinet's decisions," he said after opening the Bi-Regional Workshop on Restricting the Marketing of Unhealthy Foods and Non-alcoholic Beverages to Children in the Western Pacific and Southeast Asia here yesterday.

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES
MUKA SURAT : 20
RUANGAN : PRIME NEWS

'Serious vaccination side effects rare'

KUALA LUMPUR: Parents should not fear having their children vaccinated as serious adverse side effects were extremely rare.

Health Ministry deputy director-general (public health) Datuk Dr Lokman Hakim Sulaiman said all medicines caused side effects and they differed from person to person.

"Vaccination side effects or adverse events following immunisation (AEFI) are usually mild, self-limiting and can be treated at home.

"Serious AEFI can occur, but they are very rare. That usually requires urgent medical attention, and may need hospitalisation," he told *New Straits Times*.

The NST reported yesterday that the ministry was considering making immunisation compulsory for children following a spike in cases of diseases that can be prevented through vaccination.

He said there were many reasons why some parents hesitate to vaccinate their kids. Besides the potential for side effects, he said, other concerns included the halal status of the vaccines.

"There is a lack of understanding about the importance of immunisation to keep children safe.

"The ministry has developed a booklet for healthcare workers to use in explaining vaccination to parents.

"We are also collaborating with organisations, and we have campaigns and public education about vaccination, such as Immunisation Week, held on the fourth week of April every year."

Consultant paediatrician and neonatologist Datuk Dr Musa Mohd Nordin said immunisation was the primary means of prevention against more than 26 diseases, including diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio, measles, mumps and rubella. Every year, he said, immunisation prevented 2.5 million deaths and saved 750,000 children from disability worldwide.

And, he said, more lives could be saved if vaccines were more available in developing countries.

"Immunised children have higher scores in intelligence quotient, mathematics and language."

Dr Musa said vaccines in the ministry's National Immunisation Programme (NIP) had been scrutinised by the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia and National Fatwa Council, so there was no reason to doubt their efficacy, safety and permissibility (halal).

Malaysian Medical Association president Dr Ashok Zachariah Philip said immunisation was also important for the community's health.

"When the majority are vaccinated, the disease will not spread from person to person, so even unvaccinated people are protected. This is called herd immunity."

National Parent-Teacher Association president Assoc Prof Datuk Dr Mohamad Ali Hassan said NIP should be made mandatory.

"It is a necessity to protect our children. I am sure the ministry ensures all vaccines are halal."