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UNRAVELING DEMENTIA

“ World Health Organization (WHO) data from 2022 estimated that around 8.5% of older adults or 260,000 people in Malaysia are living with dementia.”

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Foreword from the Deputy Dean of Research

Welcome to the second issue of Pulse Magazine for 2024!

I am thrilled to introduce this special edition, themed around International Health Day. This issue is brimming with inspiring stories and groundbreaking initiatives that capture the essence of global health celebrations.

In honour of World Nursing Day, we shine a spotlight on the incredible community nurse competency program in cancer screening for early diagnosis. Our dedicated community nurses are true heroes, tirelessly working to detect cancer early and provide exceptional care, ultimately saving lives.

For World Hepatitis Day, we delve into the dynamic world of rapid-start treatment programs for Hepatitis C, focusing on those who inject drugs. This swift and comprehensive approach is transforming lives, emphasizing the power of timely intervention and holistic care.

Celebrating World Asthma Day, we feature the heartwarming efforts of our paediatricians, who are champions in managing and treating asthma in young patients. Their relentless dedication to improving the quality of life for children with asthma is nothing short of inspiring.

World Environmental Day brings a crucial discussion on harnessing research in Planetary Health. This piece explores innovative strategies for climate resilience in public health, highlighting the critical link between environmental sustainability and our well-being.

We're also excited to share the impactful two-day event, "Unravelling Dementia - A Journey of Understanding." This event was a beacon of knowledge and support, raising awareness about dementia and providing invaluable resources for caregivers.

Our Aspirasi Sihat 2.0 initiative showcases the outstanding work of our Master of Public Health students as they conduct community-based cancer screenings. This program not only delivers essential health services to the community but also offers our students hands-on experience, shaping them into the future leaders of public health.

A remarkable addition is the Silent Mentor Corridor, a newly established passage that bridges the Faculty of Medicine and the University Malaya Medical Centre. This corridor pays tribute to the first one hundred Silent Mentors, whose invaluable contributions to medical education and research are eternally etched on its walls. Their selfless donations have enriched our medical students' learning experiences, fostering a profound understanding of anatomy and human compassion.

This lively issue of Pulse Magazine is a testament to our faculty's unwavering commitment to advancing global health through education, research, and community engagement. We hope these stories inspire you to reflect on the vital role we all play in promoting health and well-being worldwide.

Thank you for joining us in celebrating these remarkable achievements and initiatives. Enjoy the read!

PROF. DR. SANJAY RAMPAL A/L LEKHRAJ RAMPAL

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**Thanks for your many years of
service for Pulse@UM Kae Yi!
All the best in your future
endeavor!*

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Unraveling Dementia - A Journey of Understanding



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Dementia is a broad umbrella term for all neurocognitive disorders characterized by a decline in memory, thinking, and decision-making. World Health Organization (WHO) data from 2022 estimated that around 8.5% of older adults or 260,000 people in Malaysia are living with dementia. The magnitude of physical, psychological, social and economic impacts for people living with dementia and their families and carers, as well as the society is considerably huge. Promoting awareness and empowering caregivers with the necessary knowledge and skills will enable them to cope with the challenges of dementia caregiving and help them deliver better care and support to their loved ones living with dementia. Henceforth, the WHO has developed *iSupport*, a training and support manual for carers of people with dementia, and we are collaborating with WHO to develop a Malaysian version of *iSupport* in the Malay language.

To raise awareness about dementia among the public, especially the caregivers, and to improve the preparedness of healthcare personnel for dementia care, a two-day event with the theme “Unravelling Dementia - A Journey of Understanding” was held on 21-22 December 2023 at Universiti Malaya Medical Centre (UMMC). The event was led by undergraduate students (Cohort 12, 2022/2023) from the Department of Nursing Science, Faculty of Medicine with funding from the UMSC CA.R.E. Fund Research Grant (UMG003C-2022), private sponsors and individual donations. The dementia awareness event was organized in collaboration with the

Alzheimer’s Disease Foundation Malaysia with the support of the UMMC’s Geriatric Unit, especially the nursing team and the management of UMMC.

Among the activities conducted during the dementia awareness event were talks by experts from medical, nursing and allied health disciplines to educate audience on dementia-related topics. To promote a better understanding of the issues surrounding dementia care, a forum engaging healthcare professionals and caregivers in a meaningful discussion and experience sharing took place. Public booths were set up with activities such as memory-related activities such as puzzles, and sensory pads were held to allow attendees to gain a firsthand understanding of cognitive challenges faced by those afflicted with dementia. Posters related to dementia care were put on display to the public at the foyer of Plaza UMMC for two days.

The public awareness about dementia is still poor and the knowledge of dementia among the healthcare personnel is below par. There is a need to have continual campaigns to raise awareness and destigmatized dementia. *Unraveling Dementia - A Journey of Understanding* event has a far-reaching potential impact on educating, advocating, and supporting people living with dementia. The *iSupport* is made freely available on WHO’s webpage to address the educational needs of a large proportion of carers, who may not have access to formal training of dementia care ■



Figure 1 & 2. The opening ceremony of the dementia awareness event.

Hepatitis C in the Fast Lane: Rapid-Start Treatment for People Who Inject Drugs



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Hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection is a significant global health concern, affecting millions of people annually. Around 58 million people globally have HCV infection, with about 1.5 million new infections each year. In 2019, about 290,000 people died from HCV-related issues like liver cirrhosis and cancer. In Malaysia, the number of people with long-term HCV infection is moderate, affecting 1.9% to 2.5% of the population.

With a 2.5% HCV prevalence in Malaysia, an estimated 384,000 people are infected by HCV, with some estimates ranging from 272,000 to 443,000. Among them, over 30,000 are people who inject drugs (PWID). PWIDs face a higher risk due to unsafe practices like sharing of drug paraphernalia and contaminated injecting equipment. This risk is especially high in Kuala Lumpur due to its higher HCV prevalence. Studies have shown that PWID, including justice-involved individuals, are more likely to have HCV infection. Despite the availability of effective treatments like direct-acting antivirals (DAA), PWID has challenges in initiating the treatment.

The current standard protocol for HCV infection treatment in Malaysia involves multiple clinic visits and complex assessments, which can deter PWID from completing the process. Additionally, logistical barriers and lengthy turnaround times in healthcare centres, especially in remote areas, hinder timely treatment initiation. International studies also highlight similar challenges, with PWID facing barriers like mistrust in the medical system, lengthy authorization processes, and extensive medical assessments before treatment initiation.

Innovative approaches such as integrated treatment models, rapid treatment

initiation, and simplified care pathways are being explored globally to address these challenges. These approaches aim to streamline the process, reduce barriers, and improve PWID engagement and treatment completion rates. Several studies, including those conducted in France and the United States have shown promising results with rapid treatment initiation models. For example, a seven-day starter pack of DAA was provided while awaiting confirmatory HCV RNA results, reducing the time spent visiting the doctor for the results and obtaining the medicine.

In Malaysia, pilot studies for rapid treatment initiation have also demonstrated positive outcomes, with many PWID starting treatment on the same day as diagnosis. This model of care relies heavily on a GeneXpert machine, which utilizes real-time polymerase chain reaction (PCR) to perform rapid and accurate testing for various infectious diseases, including HCV infection. Implementing rapid treatment initiation strategies can significantly reduce the time to treatment initiation and improve treatment completion rates. However, this model of care can be challenging due to its cost and the limited availability of resources.

Innovative healthcare practices like patient navigation and telemedicine facilitated by community healthcare workers hold strong potential to simplify HCV infection treatment pathways. These bold steps not only break down barriers for PWID but also pave the way for faster, more effective treatment outcomes, bringing us closer to the vision of eliminating Hepatitis C as a public health threat in Malaysia ■

Celebrating World Asthma Day with the Paediatricians



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World Asthma Day, celebrated on 7th May 2024, is a day dedicated to raising awareness about the most common chronic respiratory disease, that affecting about 25 million people worldwide. This disease which has been around for centuries was first described by the ancient Chinese as an illness with "troubled breathing and wheezing" in 2600 BCE. However, it wasn't until 1698 that Sir John Floyer distinguished asthma from other chronic lung diseases [1]. Despite the staggering 3 million papers published on asthma, there's still much more to learn about this age-old disease.

Since 1995, the Universiti Malaya Medical Centre (UMMC) Paediatric Respiratory Unit has been working hard to improve the lives of Malaysian children suffering from asthma. Our first iconic study was the International Study of Asthma and Allergies in Childhood (ISAAC) where the prevalence of asthma and other atopic diseases as well as the trends of this disease were investigated. At that time, prevalence of asthma symptoms among Malaysian children aged 13-14 years old was 5-12%, allergic rhinitis (AR) was 8-18% and eczema was at 8-10% [2]. In the ISAAC III (2001-2003), the prevalence of the three conditions was largely unchanged in both age groups.[3]

Over the years, our research has produced numerous impactful studies. A few notable results from our studies are as follows:

- A cross-sectional study looking at pre-school wheezing (age <6 years) found that 84% had a previous history of wheezing; a median of 4 wheezing attacks and median of 5 doctor visits, with many misdiagnosed as “pneumonia” or “bronchiolitis” and therefore mismanaged.[4]
- In a one-year longitudinal study of children hospitalised with an RSV infection, one in five children had a subsequent history of recurrent wheezing. [5]
- A history of maternal wheezing or respiratory tract infection during pregnancy was significantly associated with 7 times increased risk of wheezing in their infants in the first 12 months. [6]
- A prospective neonatal study found that a maternal diet high in fat and sugar during pregnancy predisposes their infants to having recurrent respiratory tract infections (RTIs). [7] Furthermore, infants colonised at birth with *Streptococcus pneumoniae* had a lower risk of RTIs at 6-month of life.[8]
- In a cross-sectional study involving 82 children with asthma, 84% were sensitised to house dust mite. We also found a significant association between a positive skin prick test and severity of asthma but not with their total Ig E levels.[9]
- In a study looking at parental supervision of preventer asthma medication to children, only 30% of parents directly supervised the medication use by their children. [10] Therefore, this study aided us in educating parents regarding their role in their children’s asthma management.
- UMMC was the first paediatric centre to successfully shift from the use of nebulised salbutamol to inhaled salbutamol as the first line treatment of acute asthma. A retrospective study in 2017 found no significant difference in admission rate nor in re-attendance rate. [11]

The latest Malaysian Asthma guideline in children [12], which the UMMC Respiratory team participated in, addresses the issues with diagnosis and management of both acute and chronic asthma. Future research is in the pipeline for us in UMMC as we hope to investigate and improve our knowledge and ultimately the treatment and care of our Malaysian children ■

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HARNESSING RESEARCH IN PLANETARY HEALTH:

A Strategic Approach to Climate Resilience in Public Health



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In the context of global health, transdisciplinary research is becoming important as many of the planet's challenges, such as climate change, environmental degradation, and pandemics, are profoundly interconnected. Thus, a holistic approach is needed. To address global health related issues, a few holistic and multidisciplinary approaches are available among which One Health, Eco-Health, and Planetary Health are the most popular ideas at present.



Figure 1 (top): Urban health clinic using renewable energy.
Figure 2 (bottom): Flood-resistant Agricultural Practices in a Rural Area

One Health approach may be a “one-way interaction,” which is a cause-and-effect perspective, and Eco-Health’s ultimate goals are sustainable human and animal well-being through healthier ecosystems. However, Planetary Health approach considers the long-term consequences of all direct and indirect drivers such as climate change and land use changes on global health issues such as food and water security, and the implications for human health – in which the nexus between these related matters are considered. Despite being a relatively new field, Planetary Health has garnered increased attention in recent years due to the escalating consequences of climate change, pollution, pandemics, and other environmental predicaments. Planetary Health adopts a comprehensive perspective that acknowledges the interconnectedness between human health and the overall well-being of the planet.

The phenomenon of climate change poses a substantial obstacle to public health on a global scale, with a diverse array of consequences. As global temperatures continue to increase, there exists an immediate necessity to bolster the resilience of public health systems. The concept of planetary health in this perspective, emphasizes the interconnection between human health and environmental sustainability, presenting a comprehensive framework for comprehending and addressing the health repercussions of climate change. Studies have highlighted that disadvantaged communities, encompassing low-income societies and indigenous populations, bear a disproportionate burden of climate-related health hazards. Through recognition and rectification of these vulnerabilities, researchers can aid in fortifying resilience in the most vulnerable communities.

Strengthening the adaptive capabilities of public health systems represents another critical domain for research. This encompasses fortifying healthcare infrastructure, establishing early warning mechanisms for climate-related health perils, and integrating considerations of climate change into health policies and initiatives. By enhancing the capacity of health systems to react efficiently to the challenges brought about by climate change, researchers can help alleviate the detrimental impacts on human health and well-being.

Exploring co-benefits of climate change resilience for public health and environmental sustainability is also imperative. For example, advocating for sustainable modes of transportation like cycling, walking, and even public transport not only diminishes greenhouse gas emissions but also improves air quality and promotes physical activity – resulting in numerous health advantages.

Research on climate change resilience within public health is indispensable for addressing the health ramifications of climate change and advocating for sustainable development. The significance of embracing a planetary health outlook in forthcoming research on climate change resilience in public health is by addressing vulnerabilities, enhancing adaptive capacity, exploring co-benefits, and fostering collaboration through which researchers can assist in constructing a more resilient and sustainable future for the global community ■



Figure 2: Renewable Energy-Powered Public Transportation System in an Urban Setting

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The Community Nurse Competency Programme in Cancer Screening and Navigation for Early Diagnosis of Cancer



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Breast, colorectal, and cervical cancer poses a significant health challenge globally, including in Malaysia. Despite widespread healthcare coverage, more than half of cancer cases in the country are diagnosed at later stages. This underscores the critical need for early detection strategies, including symptom awareness and screening initiatives. Community or primary care clinics are usually the initial point of contact for community members seeking assistance before hospital admission for treatment. Therefore, effective early detection efforts can commence within the community setting. Nurses working in these clinics play an essential frontline role in connecting tertiary diagnostic and treatment care with primary healthcare for prompt cancer detection. Their responsibilities extend to guiding individuals on breast cancer risks, screening protocols, and self-examination techniques. Additionally, they facilitate the entire healthcare journey from initial assessments to treatment planning, ensuring a patient-centred approach that seamlessly transitions to hospital care when necessary. This comprehensive support system is pivotal in enhancing outcomes and patient satisfaction throughout the cancer care continuum.

Hence, the REBUNG Train the Trainer Community Nurses Competency Programme for Cancer Care was established to enhance nurses' proficiency in clinical breast examination, breast, colorectal and cervical cancer diagnostic procedures, risk assessment, and navigator roles. This programme is a key component of the REBUNG (Reducing Barriers in Cancer Early Diagnosis in The Urban B40 Group) project (UM IIRG003A-19HWB, MBPJ SEED 4.0-MBPJ02-2022B and Selangor State Government Health Initiatives Project: GA030-2023), one of five subprojects aimed at piloting implementation strategies to promote early cancer detection. Collaborating with the Ministry of Health Malaysia and the Selangor government, the project aims to develop and implement cancer control strategies. Initially focused on breast



Figure 1: REBUNG in Health Campaign at Kampung Cempaka, Petaling Jaya (Sept 2023)

cancer care in 2022, the Train the Trainer Community Nurse Competency Programme expanded its scope in 2023 to include women's cancer, encompassing breast and cervical cancer care, and in 2024 to include colorectal cancer.

The REBUNG Train the Trainer Community Nurses Competency Programme for Cancer Care was established within a well-equipped resource centre, overseen by four certified breast care nurses from the Breast Care Resource Centre at UMMC. This programme is structured into three modules to provide comprehensive training. Module A is an innovative online global breast educator course in collaboration with the Know Your Lemons Foundation (knowyourlemons.org). This comprehensive programme aims to empower individuals and organizations to educate women in their local communities about breast cancer. It covers essential topics such as breast cancer symptoms, screening methods, testing, and risk factors. Participants will gain insights into breast cancer epidemiology, clinical examination techniques, diagnostic pathways, risk assessments, and navigating breast health services. Module B offers a hands-on two-week attachment competency training within hospital settings. Participants delve deeper into the significance of early detection and treatment for breast cancer. They will learn to perform clinical breast examinations accurately, assist in navigating diagnostic pathways, and establish valuable networks with Cancer NGOs and diagnostic centres. Module C focuses on leadership and training skills, providing participants with the necessary abilities to effectively disseminate knowledge gained from Modules A and B. The leadership programme enables nurses from diagnostic centres to provide sustainable training and networks with the feeding

community clinics in the MOH. This holistic approach ensures that participants are equipped not only with clinical expertise but also with leadership and teaching skills essential for community education and support.

Nineteen nurses from community health clinics (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development) and hospitals have completed the REBUNG Train the Trainer Community Nurse Competency Programme for Cancer Care successfully. Additionally, they have attained certification as Know Your Lemons Global Breast Health Educators. The breast education reach of the participants can be viewed on the Know Your Lemons Impact Map (knowyourlemons.org/impact). These dedicated REBUNG nurses have been actively involved in facilitating clinical breast examinations and guiding patients through the path to cancer treatment in their respective community health clinics and hospitals. Moreover, they actively participate in various health campaigns focused on promoting early recognition of cancer symptoms. Looking ahead to 2024, our objective is to expand the programme to encompass breast, cervical, and colorectal cancer care, thereby reinforcing our commitment to comprehensive cancer care and community education ■



Figure 2: REBUNG in MBPJ Hari Bandaraya Health Fair (May 2022)

Anatomy of Anatomy:

Training the Trainers Module, Silent Mentor Organisation Universiti Malaya



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The Silent Mentors Programme at Tzu-Chi University of Taiwan was launched in May 2002, and it has been a significant milestone in the field of medical education. This programme involves the use of donated bodies that are referred to as "Silent Mentors." These donors give up their bodies without expecting any compensation or recognition, and they do so with the understanding that their remains will be used for medical student training purposes. Following the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Universiti Malaya & Tzu-Chi University of Taiwan, a new unit was set up in the Faculty of Medicine on 23rd, March 2012 to organize the training of the medical students, doctors, and surgeons through a unique body donation programme. The body donors will be addressed as the silent mentors and will be treated with dignity and respect as if they are living patients.

The Faculty of Medicine created a corridor connecting the faculty and teaching hospital

(Universiti Malaya Medical Centre) called the Silent Mentor Corridor, where the names of the first one hundred Silent Mentors were listed on one of the walls. This programme aims to promote a holistic approach to medical education by weaving professional training with humanistic values. Participants in the programme are required to know the life history of their mentors who have donated their bodies for medical research and training without expecting anything in return. The ultimate goal is to produce caring and compassionate doctors who not only possess knowledge and surgical skills but also demonstrate empathy and understanding towards others.

The Silent Mentor Programme (SMP) Unit, Faculty of Medicine, Universiti Malaya has organized a short Clinical Anatomy course in September 2023. The course aimed to provide aspiring medical professionals with the unique opportunity to learn about human organs

through the generous donation of bodies of silent mentors.

Throughout the programme, participants were engaged with human organs, focusing on three anatomical regions: the neck, upper limb, and abdomen. The Malaysian Anatomical Association (MAA) was invited as trainers for the course.

This initiative is commendable as it provides an opportunity for medical students to gain hands-on experience with human organs while also honouring the memory of those who have generously donated their bodies for educational purposes. This approach not only enhances the learning experience but also promotes empathy and appreciation for the importance of organ donation.

The use of silent mentors in this programme adds an emotional layer to the learning experience, as it allows students to connect with the individuals whose lives were transformed by organ donation. This connection can inspire future generations to consider becoming organ donors themselves and make a meaningful difference in the lives of others.

In summary, the Silent Mentor Programme's Clinical Anatomy course is an innovative approach in educating medical students that combines practical experience with a deep appreciation for the impact of organ donation. By utilizing silent mentors, the programme fosters both academic knowledge and personal growth, making it a valuable addition to any medical education curriculum ■



Figure 1 & 2: Remembering and appreciating the donors

"I hope that in the last moment of my life, my body can contribute to the medical society by training a bunch of good doctors"

Mr Chan Kee Kok
Quoted on 10 Nov 2022 ;
passed away peacefully on 15 Nov 2022

"让国家得以继续栽培更多良好医师，以便让病人能接受应有的医疗服务"

["Enable the country to continue cultivating more good physicians so that patients can receive the necessary medical services"]

Madam Chan Choo Yang
Quoted on 19 Mar 2022 ;
passed away peacefully on 8 Nov 2022

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Narrative Medicine:

Health Humanities Approach to Improving Healthcare



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Patients may not follow their doctor's advice or take their medications as prescribed. Often unbeknown to their healthcare providers, patients are exploring alternative or complementary therapies and supplements. Sometimes complications may arise, adverse effects may occur, and patients do not achieve the best outcome as expected.

How does the journey of healing get diverted? Do healthcare providers not listen carefully to their patients? The stories patients share with us – about themselves, their illness, their circumstances, their families, the systems they have to abide by, and the support they have – are all vital towards providing good healthcare service which includes disease prevention and health promotion activities.

Patients need guidance and the autonomy to make important decisions about their health that are in line with their own beliefs and values. Doctors have an ethical and professional duty of care to provide and facilitate optimal care that meets the needs of their patients and should be trained for this role.

Narrative Medicine aims to help patients and health care professionals be sensitive to the exchange of complex and unique stories of illness. It is a clinical discipline founded more than 20 years ago by Professor Rita Charon and her colleagues at Columbia University, USA. It incorporates the philosophy and practices of the humanities, arts, patient-centred care, and health care justice. The concept of Narrative Medicine started with the effort to appreciate narrativity in the clinic. This initiative saw the coming together of healthcare professionals, patients, and family caregivers to read and write in literature and medicine classes within the medical humanities settings. With strong commitment and skilled listening, the power of representation to perceive others and the value of partnership that results from narrative contact, the signature methodology – Attention, Representation and Affiliation have emerged.

Narrative Medicine is new in Malaysia. With the help of the Fulbright Specialist Programme, a workshop to introduce Narrative Medicine was held at the Faculty of Medicine, Universiti Malaya in January 2024. Ms Catherine Rogers, a Fulbright Specialist and Associate Professor Deepthiman Gowda, of Kaiser Permanente Bernard J. Tyson School of Medicine, Los Angeles were the speakers.

The two-day workshop was attended by clinicians, post graduate trainees, medical students, researchers, and senior lecturers from the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. They had a personal immersive experience of the signature methods of Narrative Medicine with transformative group work. Post workshop, participants were keen to make relevant changes to their practice and were eager to recommend a similar workshop to their colleagues.

Participants were tasked with creating a simple work in any medium in response to the prompt: “What Does it Mean to be Human?” Their creative work is currently exhibited at the T.J. Danaraj Medical Library, Faculty of Medicine, Universiti Malaya from 1st May 2024 to 30th June 2024. In her two weeks spent at Universiti Malaya, Ms. Catherine Rogers not only ran close reading sessions with medical students and paediatric trainees, but also appeared as a guest in the Breakfast@UMHealth. She also held discussions with academic staff from Medical Education, Arts and Humanities to explore the possibility of integrating Narrative Medicine into undergraduate education. It is hoped that the principles of Narrative Medicine will be incorporated into the undergraduate curriculum in the near future ■

References:

1. Charon R. Introduction. The Principles and Practice of Narrative Medicine. Oxford University Press; 2017
2. Driever EM, Stiggelbout AM, Brand PLP. Patients' preferred and perceived decision-making roles, and observed patient involvement in videotaped encounters with medical specialists. Patient Educ Couns. 2022;105(8):2702-2707



Program Aspirasi Sihat:

A Model for Community-Based Cancer Screening



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The Program Aspirasi Sihat, part of the Masters of Public Health elective course, is a dynamic health promotion initiative aimed at empowering and improving the health and well-being of communities. This program is meticulously designed to address prevalent health issues within the community, fostering positive lifestyle changes through education, engagement, and accessible resources. By emphasizing preventive measures, health education, and community involvement, Program Aspirasi Sihat strives to create a lasting impact and cultivate a healthier environment for all residents.

This year, Program Aspirasi Sihat took place on 25th May 2024 at Apartment Desa Mentari, focusing on cancer screening for five different types of cancer: lung cancer, colorectal cancer, breast cancer, prostate cancer, and cervical cancer.

A broad coalition of stakeholders was involved to provide comprehensive support

and ensure interventions were tailored to the community's needs and cultural sensitivities. Key stakeholders included the Public Health Department (UMMC), Parliamentary Office of Petaling Jaya, Desa Mentari Community Leaders and Representatives, National Cancer Society Malaysia (NCSM), REBUNG Project, National Population and Family Development Board (LPPKN), Colorectal Cancer Survivorship Society Malaysia (CORUM), Breast Cancer Welfare Association Malaysia (BCWA), and many more.

The day kicked off with a lively aerobic session, bringing smiles to children's faces. Residents had the opportunity to win prizes from lucky draw sessions, while a mix of interactive games and activities at various booths sparked interest across all age groups within the community.

At the lung cancer booth, for instance, participants could take a smokerlyzer test to measure carbon monoxide levels, followed by referrals to government clinics



Figure 1 (top left): MPH and MBBS student volunteers celebrating the success of the event with BCWA. Figure 2 (top right): Colorectal cancer booth. Figure 3 (bottom left): Children adding their coloured fingerprints to the tree while learning about cervical cancer. Figure 4 (bottom right): Smokerlyzer tests by NCSM with supervision from the medical doctors in the group.

for chest x-rays if needed. Experienced doctors and nurses from NCSM provided free Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) rapid-test screenings to the first 200 male participants aged 40 and above. A pink mobile van offered a unique opportunity for breast cancer screening in a safe and private environment. A social media challenge encouraged residents to share promotion of cancer screening on social media using specific hashtags.

Program Aspirasi Sihat is a comprehensive initiative designed to increase awareness and participation in cancer screening among the B40 community. By integrating educational talks, interactive booth activities, survivor sharing sessions, and leveraging social media challenges, this program provides essential information

about cancer risks and the benefits of early detection through screening.

One of the students involved remarked, “The health promotion program, from planning to implementation, has been a treasure trove of valuable lessons that will guide my future work in community health. One of the biggest takeaways is the absolute necessity of getting the community involved. This wasn't just about participation; it was about truly understanding their needs and fostering a sense of ownership. Second, I witnessed the incredible power of teamwork and forging strong relationships with local organizations. This wasn't just about expanding the program's reach; it was about creating a powerful network of support and expertise” ■

Igniting Change: Malaysia's Journey to a Smoke-Free Future



Book title: **8 Petua Mudah Berjaya Berhenti Merokok**

Authors: **Siti Idayu Hasan, Farizah Hairi, Amer Siddiq Amer Nordin**

Associate Professor Dr. Farizah Binti Mohd Hairi is one of the authors of “8 Petua Mudah Berjaya Berhenti Merokok”. This eBook was co-written by Dr Siti Idayu Hasan and Associate Professor Dr Amer Siddiq Amer Nordin. Launched under the auspices of the Young Writers Club of Malaysia (Kelab Penulis Muda Malaysia, KPMM), this pivotal guide made its debut at the prestigious International Book Fair on Saturday, May 25th, 2024, at Dewan Tun Razak, World Trade Centre, Kuala Lumpur.

At this event, 11 authors were given the opportunity to speak on the stage of Dewan Tun Razak and promote their respective eBooks.

In this interview, Associate Professor Dr. Farizah shares her journey, research, and vision for a smoke-free world.



Figure 1 (top): The e-book cover. Figure 2 (bottom): Authors at the International Book Fair 2024.

Q: Who is the targeted audience for this book?

A: Our eBook caters to a diverse audience—smokers seeking liberation and health-conscious individuals. We have crafted an accessible guide that takes readers through each step of their quitting journey. From understanding the benefits of a smoke-free life to celebrating their success, we are here to support them.

Q: How has your research contributed towards the development of this book?

A: My extensive research with the Nicotine Addiction Research Group, Universiti Malaya has been pivotal. By analysing existing cessation methods, understanding addiction mechanisms, and studying success stories, we've curated effective strategies. It's not just about quitting; it's about reclaiming life.

Q: Can you share any success stories from individuals who have enrolled in smoking cessation programmes?

A: Wira (not his real name), a former smoker, successfully quit using the Quit Smoking techniques inspired by our eBook. His journey exemplifies the impact of our approach.

Q: What distinguishes your book from other smoking cessation guides available in the market?

A: What sets our eBook apart is its holistic approach. We blend evidence-based techniques, personal anecdotes, and practical exercises. It's not a generic guide—it addresses emotional triggers, habit formation, and long-term health. The target population for our eBook, written in Malay, aligns perfectly with the majority of smokers in Malaysia—Malay individuals. By crafting the eBook in Malay, we've ensured that it resonates culturally and linguistically with the very audience we aim to empower.

Q: How do you envision your book impacting public health efforts to reduce smoking rates?

A: Our vision is a smoke-free world. As more people quit using our methods, overall smoking rates decline. It's a ripple effect—healthier communities, reduced costs. Coinciding with the launch, World No Tobacco Day was celebrated globally on May 31. The theme for 2024 is "Protecting Children from Tobacco Industry Interference"; emphasizes the importance of safeguarding our younger generation from the dangers of tobacco.

Q: What feedback have you received from readers or healthcare professionals about the book?

A: Readers have praised the eBook's clarity and relatability. They appreciate its empowerment. It's like having a supportive friend throughout their journey.

Q: What is your advice to academics who wish to write a book like yours?

A: To fellow academics: Research, empathy, practicality. Understand your audience, simplify complex concepts, and infuse passion. Your work matters.

Q: What is your next book? And when can we expect it?

A: My co-authored project with Dr. Siti Idayu Hasan—'Conducting Scientific Research for Beginners.' It's a simplified gem. I used to coordinate research methodology courses, and Dr. Idayu brings her expertise in research impact. Together, we're empowering young researchers

Get the eBook through this [LINK](#) or scan the QR code.



Achievements & Awards





13 - 14 August 2024
8.30 am - 4.30 pm

Cube,
Level 4,
Faculty of Medicine,
UM

UM Student/RA: RM 300
UM Staff: RM 400
Non-UM: RM 500

Qualitative Methodology Workshop For Health Research

CPD
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Qualitative research is now recognised as an important research methodology to answer clinical research questions. It is used to explore the behaviours of patients and healthcare professionals; evaluate the process of clinical services and interventions; explain the outcomes of clinical trials; and assess the needs of stakeholders of healthcare services. It helps to answer the 'why', 'how' and 'what' of a phenomenon within a clinical context.

This workshop, therefore, aims to help the participants understand what qualitative research is and guide them step by step through the research process via lectures, role play and hands-on exercises.

At the end of the workshop, the participant will be able to:

- understand the differences between qualitative and quantitative research
- choose an appropriate qualitative study design to answer the research question
- acquire basic interviewing skills for in-depth interviews and focus group discussions
- know what to prepare before conducting an interview
- know basic principles in qualitative data analysis

Organised by:
Research Office, Faculty of Medicine and
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SPEAKERS/ FACILITATORS



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Assoc. Prof. Dr. Adina Abdullah



Dr. Lee Yew Kong



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Upcoming Event



FAKULTI PERUBATAN
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HOW TO PLAN & WRITE-UP A PROPOSAL FOR YOUR RESEARCH STUDY

A PRIMER FOR THE CLINICAL POST-GRADUATE STUDENT WITH STATISTICAL SOFTWARE USE

21 August
2024

0830 - 1230

Cube, Faculty of Medicine,
University Malaya

SPEAKER: PROF DR KULENTHRAN ARUMUGAM

The purpose of the workshop is to guide the student on how best to do and submit a research study proposal as required under the Regulations for either the Masters or Parallel Pathway Programme. There will be two parts. The first part involves guiding the student on choosing the most appropriate yet scientifically sound kind of study that he should embark on i.e. one that is most appropriate for his needs – given the constraints of time and his clinical commitments. These studies include the cross sectional studies, case-control studies, the dose-response studies and evaluating a diagnostic or screening test. The nature of the study, the method involved, their advantages and disadvantages and the appropriate statistical analysis to be done will be covered, including how to estimate the sample size needed. The OpenEpi statistical software will be used. The second part involves guiding the student on how to do and write up a literature review on the research topic (another requirement) using Endnote – an indispensable guide.

WORKSHOP FEE

UM Student: RM 75

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