

Using data in the war against diabetes

SEREMBAN: Billions of ringgit are being spent yearly on diabetes, a disease that currently afflicts an estimated 3.9 million adults in the country, according to the Health Ministry.

The government has to spend RM4.9bil a year to deal with problems related to diabetes, which is worrying, said Health Minister Dr Zaliha Mustafa.

She said the 2019 National Health and Morbidity Survey found that the prevalence of diabetes among adults aged 18 and above showed an increase from 11.2% in 2011 to 13.4% in 2015 and then rose to 18.3% in 2019.

Therefore, she said that continuous efforts involving all relevant parties are crucial in efforts to combat the disease, including through the organisation of the SeDia Cohort, which is the collection of long-term data to understand the complex interaction between lifestyle, environment, genetics and socioeconomic development.

She said this to reporters after officiating the Seremban Diabetes Cohort (SeDia) programme, a collaboration between the ministry and the International Medical University, which is the first large-scale cohort study focusing on



Ear to the ground: Dr Zaliha (right) speaking to pharmacist Mohd Khairuzzaman Mohd Latif at the Diabetes Cohort programme. — Bernama

diabetes patients, here yesterday, as reported by Bernama.

Meanwhile, Dr Zaliha said her ministry is reviewing efforts to

promote research and development to increase the production of medicines in the country, including by involving

various ministries.

“This will enable reduced dependence on imported medicines,” she said.