

MoH, IMU launch SeDia cohort study to explore factors, complications of diabetes in patients

KUALA LUMPUR: The Ministry of Health Malaysia (MoH) and International Medical University (IMU) recently launched the first large-scale cohort study on diabetes to explore factors involved in the development of diabetes and complications that patients experience.

The study, named Seremban Diabetes SeDia Cohort Study, was officially launched by Yang Dipertuan Besar Negeri Sembilan Tuanku Muhriz Almarhum Tuanku Munawir.

Also in attendance were Health Minister Dr Zaliha Mustafa and IMU vice-chancellor cum chief executive officer Prof Dr Abdul Aziz Baba.

MoH and IMU in a joint statement said the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the establishment of the SeDia Cohort Study was signed on May 17 last year, while the research protocol obtained the approval of MoH's Medical Research and Ethics Committee (MREC) on March 17, 2023.

This 12-year study marks the first important step towards obtaining data that is socio-culturally relevant to the local community. It involves over 5,000 patients registered as part of the Klinik Kesihatan Seremban's Diabetes Registry and over 7,000 of their family members, to investigate the complex web of interactions that contribute to the development of diabetes and

its complications.

"A significant amount of time is required in this study because the development of diabetes, along with its associated complications, also occur over an extended period," said the statement.

The SeDia Cohort Study will encompass a comprehensive examination of various factors, encompassing genetics and family history of diabetes to lifestyle and environmental factors, dietary regimes, physical activity, socio-economic levels and healthcare delivery.

By understanding the complex connections between these factors, the aim is to uncover optimal strategies for diabetes prevention and treatment as well as implementing evidence-based public healthcare policies and programmes that are relevant to the local community to ensure the efficacy of developed treatment and prevention initiatives in addressing the escalating burden of diabetes.

According to the statement, Malaysia has the highest incidence of diabetes in Asia Pacific and amongst the highest in the world with an estimation of 3.9 million Malaysian adults affected by the disease.

The prevalence of diabetes shows a steady upward trend, from 11.2 per cent in 2011 to 18.3 per cent in the National Health & Morbidity Survey 2019. By

2025, it is projected that seven million adults in Malaysia will have diabetes, representing a significant healthcare burden on the nation.

"The cost of treatment for diabetes patients, not including the cost of treatment for diabetes complications, is estimated at around RM3 billion per year," said the statement.

With the highest incidence of diabetes occurring amongst adults (above 18 years old) in Negeri Sembilan at 33.2 per cent, Klinik Kesihatan Seremban Jalan Rasah was selected as the study's Recruitment Centre while IMU Institute of Research, Development and Innovation will serve as the study's Coordination Centre and storage facility for biological specimens.

Diabetic patients registered with the Diabetes Registry of the Klinik Kesihatan Seremban will be invited to participate in a study along with their adult family members, voluntarily.

By using digital systems and data infrastructure, the participants' personal and medical information will be collected through a comprehensive questionnaire, capturing socio-demographic data; anthropometric measurements; medical history; dietary habits; physical activity; laboratory tests; socio-economic information and psychosocial health. — Bernama