

MALAYSIA DAY GREETINGS



HAPPY MALAYSIA DAY
16 September 2020



**FROM THE PRESIDENT AND
THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT OF
BALAI IKHTISAS MALAYSIA**



BIM
BALAI IKHTISAS MALAYSIA
MALAYSIAN
PROFESSIONAL CENTRE

47th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 47th Annual General Meeting was successfully convened on 13th August 2020, 3.00 pm at Wisma IEM, Petaling Jaya, Selangor. There were 13 voting member-institutions attending the AGM.

Past President, Mr John C.P. Chang was nominated to be the Election Chairman and there were no objections from other members.

Ar Abu Zarim Abu Bakar was re-elected as the President for the second term.

The following were duly elected:



47th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



President	:	Ar Abu Zarim Abu Bakar (PAM)
Deputy President	:	Dr. Wilmot Sasindran Dass (VAM)
Vice President	:	Assoc. Prof Dr Juan Joon Ching (IKM)
Vice President	:	Ts Hj Mohd Nasir Alias (CILTM)
Honorary Secretary	:	Dr. Wan Rasidah Abdul Kadir (MSSS)
Honorary Treasurer	:	Ir Gunasagaran Kristnan (IEM)
Ordinary Member	:	Mr Lam Kai Kun (MPS)
		Sr Lim Kok Sang (RISM)
		Dr Rosazlin Abdullah (MSSS)
		Mr Wong Khin Yip (CIOBM)
		Dr. Chee Liung Wun (VAM)
Immediate Past President	:	Mr John C.P. Chang (MPS)
Internal Auditor	:	Dr. Ismail Harun (IRIM)
		Ir Dr. Bhuvendhraa Rudrusamy (IEM)

47th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2020/2021

Congratulations to all newly elected Council Members of Balai Ikhtisas Malaysia on 13 August 2020



IR GUNASAGARAN
KRISTNAN
HONORARY
TREASURER



DR WAN RASIDAH
ABDUL KADIR
HONORARY
SECRETARY



AR ABU ZARIM
ABU BAKAR
PRESIDENT



DR. WILMOT
SASINDRAN DASS
DEPUTY PRESIDENT



MR JOHN C.P.
CHANG
IMMEDIATE PAST
PRESIDENT



ASSOC. PROF. DR.
JUAN JOON CHING
VICE PRESIDENT



TS HJ MOHD NASIR
ALIAS
VICE PRESIDENT



DR. ISMAIL HARUN
INTERNAL AUDITOR



MR LAM KAI KUN
MEMBER



DR. ROSAZLIN
ABDULLAH
MEMBER



SR LIM KOK
SANG
MEMBER



MR WONG KHIN
YIP
MEMBER



DR. CHEE LUNG
WUN
MEMBER



IR DR. BHUVENDHRAA
RUDRUSAMY
INTERNAL AUDITOR

PROFESSIONAL CENTRE

BIM's EVENT

TALK ON RECOVERY PLAN – POST MCO 13TH AUGUST 2020 MALAKOFF AUDITORIUM, WISMA IEM, PETALING JAYA

The Talk on Recovery Plan was held on Thursday, 13th August 2020, 10.30 am at Malakoff Auditorium, Wisma IEM, Petaling Jaya attended by 40 participants from various professionals. The program started with address by President Ar Abu Zarim Abu Bakar to all members. The speaker, Puan Wahida Abdul Rahman, Director of Business Services and Regional Operations Division, Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA) was invited to deliver her talk on Recovery Plan – Post MCO due to the Covid 19 pandemic that is plagued in Malaysia to date.



BIM's EVENT



There were presentations by 4 panelists from various sector including:

1. Medical & Healthcare

Prof. Dato' Dr. Mohd Azmi bin Mohd Lila, President Elect, Veterinary Association Malaysia (VAM)

2. Engineering, Construction & Property

Datuk Ar Ezumi Harzani bin Ismail, President of Pertubuhan Akitik Malaysia (PAM)

3. Pure & Applied Science

Assoc. Prof. ChM Dr Juan Joon Ching, Honorary Secretary, Institut Kimia Malaysia (IKM)

4. Accounting, Business, Commerce, Legal and Social

Dato' Ts Abd Radzak Abd Malek, International President of The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport Malaysia (CILT-M)

This Talk was followed by Q & A Session. There was satisfactory response to the many questions fielded from the floor. The event ended with the organizers giving souvenirs to the Speaker and all panelists as a token of appreciation.

ABOUT MEMBERS

SOILS 2020 Soils Management Towards Plant Productivity & Environmental Sustainability 6 – 8 October 2020

REGISTRATION FORM

Full Name: (Prof./Dr./Mr./Mrs./Ms) _____

Occupation: _____

Organisation: _____

Mailing address: _____

Contact number: (HP) _____

(O) _____

Email: _____

- () I wish to attend the conference
 () I wish to present a paper(s)
 () I wish to present a poster(s)
 () I wish to attend the conference dinner
 () I wish to attend the post conference tour

Title of paper/poster: _____

PAYMENT DETAILS

Amount : _____

Mode of payment: _____

Reference no. : _____

Date of payment : _____

Signature : _____

Date : _____

IMPORTANT DATES

Deadline registration	28 August 2020
Deadline for extended abstract submission	28 August 2020
Conference	6-7 October 2020
Post conference tour	8 October 2020



Please email this form with a copy of Extended Abstract to:
soilsconference2020@gmail.com

For any enquiries please contact :

The Secretariat SOILS 2020
Forest Plantation Programme
Forestry Biotechnology Division
Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM)
52109 Kepong, Selangor
Malaysia
+603-6279 7302/7192

Attn: Mrs. Nur Hafiza Abd Halim /
Mrs. Siti Noratikah Mustafa

POST CONFERENCE TOUR

A one day post conference tour on 8 October 2020 will be arranged for registered participants. This tour will include pedon description and visit to agricultural farm. The post conference tour is limited to 40 people on a 'first-come-first-served' basis. A fee of RM60 will be charged to cover the cost of logistics, materials and meals.

ACCOMMODATION

Delegates are advised to arrange their own accommodation. Among suggested hotels are:

Holiday Villa	+607-290 3388
KSL Hotel & Resort	+607-288 2874
Grand Paragon	+607-268 5222
Puteri Pacific	+607-219 9999
M Suites Hotel	+607-221 1000



SOIL SCIENCE CONFERENCE OF MALAYSIA

SOILS 2020

6 - 8 October 2020

Holiday Villa Johor Bahru City Centre, Johor

SOIL MANAGEMENT TOWARDS
PLANT PRODUCTIVITY &
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY



New norm and strict SOPs outlined by the National Security Council (MKN) will be adopted for your safety.

Organised by :



Supported by :



ABOUT MEMBERS

SOILS 2020 Soils Management Towards Plant Productivity & Environmental Sustainability 6 – 8 October 2020

BACKGROUND

The Malaysian Society of Soil Science (MSSS) since its inception on 2 April 1971, has been actively organising conferences, meetings, discussions and courses related to soil science with various stakeholders. Year 2020 will witness the collaboration of Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) and MSSS in organising the SOILS 2020 conference in Johor Bahru, Malaysia. This conference will gather various stakeholders from the private, governmental and non-governmental sectors in deliberating and sharing research findings on our theme, "**Soil management towards plant productivity and environmental sustainability**". Soil management is crucial in various soil landscapes, may it be in agriculture, forestry and the environment. Good management practices not only assure optimum food production but also protect the key roles of soils in sustaining biodiversity, water catchments and forests, reducing disaster risks, encouraging nutrient cycling as well as mitigating climate change. Soil management requires multi-disciplinary research and merging technologies that can provide tangible and intangible results for various stakeholders. Thus, the organising committee welcomes registration from all parties to this conference to share your advances in soil related researches and to learn new paradigms that may be able to contribute towards the given theme. Recognising soil as a finite resource, we hope to find common grounds on issues related to sustaining soil ecosystems for present and future generations.

OBJECTIVES

1. To provide a forum for discussion, exchange of ideas and information on the latest R&D on soil management and environmental sustainability.
2. To promote the study of soil science and to create public awareness on the importance of soil conservation within the context of sustainable land management.
3. To review areas of soil study relevant for national development.
4. To provide opportunities for agricultural stakeholders such as soil scientist, agronomists, planters and agro-based entrepreneurs to share knowledge, ideas, to identify and update emerging issues, and to network with one another in plantation production without compromising the soil ecosystem.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

1. Academicians, researchers and agronomists
2. Policy makers
3. Agriculture consultants/advisors
4. Individuals involved in agriculture sector
5. Any individuals interested in soil management

SCOPE

1. Soil genesis, classification & mapping
2. Soil fertility & plant nutrition
3. Soil biodiversity & ecology
4. Soils in forest landscape
5. Soil sustainability & remediation in degraded environments
6. Soils in the Anthropocene



CALL FOR PAPERS

In conjunction with SOILS 2020 theme, "**Soil management towards plant productivity and environmental sustainability**," papers of relevant topics within the conference theme are invited for oral/poster presentations. Authors are requested to submit an Extended Abstract not exceeding four (4) pages in English.

The Extended Abstract must include title, author(s), introduction, methods and materials, results and discussion, conclusion and references. It must be prepared on A4-sized paper with 25 mm margins on all sides, with single spacing using Times New Roman font size 12.

All illustrations must be inside the text of the Extended Abstract. Posters must be prepared on A1-sized paper.

BEST POSTER AWARD

Five outstanding posters will be selected by the appointed panel of judges for the award.

BEST PRESENTER AWARD

One oral presenter will be selected by the appointed panel of judges for the award.



REGISTRATION FEES

MSSS Member	RM 800.00
Non-MSSS Member	RM 900.00
Student*	RM 550.00
Post conference tour	RM 60.00

*Students must attach a verification letter from the supervisor along with the registration form.

The registration fee includes a conference bag, proceedings, lunch, refreshments and a conference dinner. The Organising Committee will strictly adhere to SOPs outlined by the National Security Council (MKN).

All payments should be in the form of online transfer/ cheque/ bank draft/ purchase order (PO) payable to:

Account Holder : THE MALAYSIAN SOCIETY OF SOIL SCIENCE
Account Number : 8602990800 (CIMB BANK BERHAD)
Address : Ground Floor, Block B,
Bangunan Pusat Pelajar,
Universiti Putra Malaysia,
43400 UPM Serdang,
Selangor, Malaysia
Branch code : 1212
Swift Code : CTBBMYKL

EXHIBITION & ADVERTISEMENT

An exhibition featuring latest products and technologies related to nutrient management (fertiliser product), field and laboratory instruments, facilities and technical services will be held during the conference. Research institutions, universities, fertiliser companies and laboratory suppliers are invited to display their product in exhibition booths and to advertise in the conference programme book. Please contact the Secretariat for further details.



ABOUT MEMBERS



**PERSATUAN FARMASI MALAYSIA
MALAYSIAN PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY**

16-2, Jalan OP 1/5, 1Puchong Business Park,
Off Jalan Puchong, 47160 Puchong, Selangor.

Tel: +603- 8079 1861 Fax: +603-8070 0388

Email: mpps.online@gmail.com Website: www.mpps.org.my

PRESS RELEASE

[FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE]

IMPLEMENTATION OF MYSEJAHTERA APPLICATION ACROSS ALL COMMUNITY PHARMACIES

Kuala Lumpur, 7th August 2020- MPS fully supports the mandatory usage of MySejahtera application for all premises as per instructed by the government on 3rd of August 2020. MySejahtera is a crucial tool to conduct tracing if there is an unfortunate case of Covid-19 outbreak, as evidenced by the multiple clusters which had been ongoing lately.

With that, MPS would like to urge all community pharmacies across Malaysia to implement the MySejahtera application at your pharmacy as soon as possible in keeping up with the times as well as keeping ourselves and our clients safe.

**Amrahi bin Buang
President
Malaysian Pharmaceutical Society**

NEWS

RM1 CEILING PRICE MAY CAUSE SHODDY FACE MASK PRODUCTION: PHARMACISTS

By CodeBlue, 14 August 2020

Pharmacist groups say face mask costs are higher in East Malaysia because of expensive sea freight and air cargo.

KUALA LUMPUR, August 14 — Pharmacist groups have warned the government that dropping the retail ceiling price of face masks to RM1 from RM1.50 could lead to the production of substandard products.

The Malaysian Pharmaceutical Society (MPS), Sarawak Pharmaceutical Society, and Sabah Pharmaceutical Society said community pharmacies are now forced to sell face masks at a loss with the sudden 33 per cent reduction of the ceiling price, as they keep a large stock of good medical-grade masks that were purchased at a higher cost.



Malaysian pharmaceutical society president amrahi buang speaks at the health ministry's town hall meeting on february 13, 2020, in putrajaya on the poisons (amendment) 2019 bill.

“We would like to urge the government to take into consideration the extra logistical costs of bringing the medical grade face masks over to Sabah and Sarawak. With sea freights and air cargo volume still expensive, the cost is always higher in East Malaysia,” the pharmacist groups said.

They also told the government to consider setting different ceiling prices for different grades of three-ply masks instead of a blanket price for all medical masks, pointing out that the cost of manufacturing a medical grade three-ply mask is much higher.

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“The medical grade masks, which are only used by our health care professionals at the frontline settings, have much better bacterial and viral filtration compared to non-medical grade face masks. Medical grade masks will be 95 per cent above filtration compared to non-medical grade, which will be merely 65 per cent to 80 per cent,” said the three pharmacist groups.

“The government should also consider reinforcing the requirements of newly manufactured face masks being registered with the Medical Device Authority (MDA) now that face mask manufacturing has resumed normally to prevent subpar imports.”

The pharmacist groups told the government to consider subsidising face masks for the bottom 40 per cent (B40), instead of legislating ceiling prices.

“Our community pharmacies are ever ready to assist in the distribution to ensure the free or subsidised face masks reach those that truly need them.”

They also reminded the public to avoid buying face masks from online platforms or any shops as the quality of products is not guaranteed.

The new legislated ceiling prices for face masks, which was announced by Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Alexander Nanta Linggi in Parliament on August 11, come even as the government has made wearing face masks mandatory in crowded public areas amid the Covid-19 outbreak, punishing violations with a maximum RM1,000 fine. Lawmakers say free face masks should be provided to low-income people.

NEWS

SOCIAL WORK IS A CRUCIAL SERVICE IN PANDEMIC TIMES

The Star, 13 August 2020

During the pandemic, the demand for social workers has become even more critical with an increase in the number of cases.

“There is anxiety over the loss of jobs leading to other social issues, restriction of movement where families being cooped up together may result in more incidents of domestic violence. Some clients have also experienced a loss of income and are unable to come for treatment, ” says Universiti Malaya Medical Centre (UMMC)’s Department of Social Work senior community development officer Khalidah Mustapa.



ReHAK social workers often have to visit the homes of their clients to assess the situation and be better able to help them.
Photo: Reproductive Health Association Kelantan

Women’s Centre for Change (WCC) Penang service manager Mangeswary Subramaniam says that she and her colleagues have had to change the way they serve the needs of their clients, especially for domestic violence cases.

During the MCO, the digital divide – between those who have access to Internet, smartphones and computers and those who don’t – has become more obvious, says Siti Hawa. Photo: Filepic

“Instead of meeting them face-to-face, we used online platforms to reach out to them.

We’ve started to provide online counselling via Zoom and WhatsApp, in addition to our on-going telephone counselling. We’ve also expanded to do online webinars in various languages on domestic violence, sexual harassment, child sexual abuse, and cyberbullying,” she adds.

Mangeswary adds that there’s an increased risk when providing safe shelter in their facilities, especially for women who face domestic violence.

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“This is because it’s difficult to provide comprehensive Covid-19 screening in a sustainable manner. Even before the pandemic, there is already a lack of adequate shelter for survivors of domestic violence nationwide and the pandemic further aggravates the situation,” she says.

But there are also issues with going online.

During the MCO, the digital divide – between those who have access to Internet, smartphones and computers and those who don’t – has become more obvious, says Reproductive Health Association Kelantan (ReHAK)’s chair of the education committee Siti Hawa Ali.

“Our latest project with adolescents involves students from a school in Kota Baru. This two-year project sponsored by Unicef involves 150 children and their families.

“During the MCO, we couldn’t run regular activities with the children at the school. We also couldn’t visit families during the MCO so we supported them through communication via phone and online through social media,” reveals Siti Hawa.

But, some of the children have issues such as poor internet connection for smartphones or computers, while others don’t even have a smartphone or computer, or their families don’t have the finances to top-up their Internet data.

“A family with eight children may have difficulties taking part in school activities (online) during the MCO because the



During the MCO, the digital divide – between those who have access to Internet, smartphones and computers and those who don’t – has become more obvious, says Siti Hawa. Photo: Filepic

whole family only has two low-spec handphones with limited function. They may not even have funds to top-up the Internet data and would rather save for other necessities like food,” Siti Hawa cites an example.

Recently, when a corporate sponsor announced they would provide free handphones to children from B40 families, ReHAK arranged for the phones to be provided with expenses for top-up to 40 children.

Emotional support, direct aid and information access become even more vital to these children and their families during the pandemic, Siti Hawa adds.

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“Over 70% of the children revealed they were worried about their family’s economic situation since their parents are daily wage earners whose income is impacted during the MCO,” she reveals.

We help direct such children and their families to possible resources where they can receive help and even support them to apply for aid (online),” she says.

Kota Baru-based ReHAK provides family planning services to about 700 clients annually. Besides sexual reproductive health education and services for families, it also does outreach programmes to schools (for children/adolescents’ issues) and women’s groups (for women’s issues). It also works on long-and-short term community-based projects.

“Our social workers are involved in running community outreach and educational programmes that help create awareness in target groups on health issues such as HIV, and helps them understand factors that may increase risky behaviours among adolescents such as cyber bullying,” explains Siti Hawa. She adds that children’s rights and protection, and gender based violence are also of concern.

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RECOGNISING SOCIAL WORK AS AN ESSENTIAL PROFESSION IN MALAYSIA

The Star, 14th August 2020



A social worker helps a family find solutions for their daughter to stay in school and for the mother to be able to support the family. Photo: Unicef

Arlene (not her real name) was five-months pregnant, on the phone seeking help from a social worker, when her abusive husband started hitting her.

The social worker from Women's Centre for Change (WCC) in Penang immediately contacted the police who rescued Arlene and arrested her husband. The social worker then brought Arlene to the hospital for a medical check-up, and with a letter from both the hospital and police, was able to arrange for Arlene to go to her relative's home in a different state during the movement control order (MCO) period.

Thankfully, Arlene and her unborn child are still safe, sheltered from her abusive husband.

Fifteen-year-old refugee Maya (not her real name) has been going to Yayasan Chow Kit (YCK)'s centre in Kuala Lumpur for a homeschooling programme for stateless children. After five years, she now runs a small baking-catering business.

Initially, her parents – daily wage earners with financial struggles – felt that Maya's only hope for a secure future was to get married, even though she is underaged.

YCK intervened by organising a community session for refugee families on child marriage. At the session, a mother from Pakistan shared about her ordeal when she was married off as a child bride and even raped during her marriage. She revealed that getting married off as a child bride didn't really secure her future. In fact, it negatively impacted her life.

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The session saved Maya from an unfortunate fate. Instead of marrying her off, her parents allowed her to learn new skills to build a future for herself.

Maya and Arlene are two of many people who have benefitted from the work of social workers whose job is to protect the vulnerable and support families-in-need.

Often, social workers have to respond to a crisis and figure out, quickly, what needs to be done to protect the people who need their help.

They intervene in various settings: social welfare, courts, prisons, rehabilitation centres, schools, medical and public health services, mental health, child care, probation services, child abuse and domestic violence cases.



Social work is an actual profession that serves to help people – individuals, families and communities – function in society,' says MASW president Dr Mohd Suhaimi. Photo: Dr Mohd Suhaimi Mohamad



Women who have been physically and sexually abused need to be protected. Photo: Unicef

However, in Malaysia, social workers aren't regarded as professionals and there is little regulation on the practice and therefore, little effort to recruit, register, license or train social workers to work either in the Department of Social Welfare or non-government organisations that cater to vulnerable groups that need help.

"Unfortunately, in Malaysia, many still confuse social work with volunteer work, which it is not," says Malaysian Association of Social Workers (MASW) president Dr Mohd Suhaimi Mohamad.

"Social work is an actual profession that serves to help people – individuals, families and communities – function in society. Social workers need a high level of interpersonal skills, knowledge about those in need and their environment, as well as the values and ethics involved in providing professional social work services," he explains.

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While compassion and kindness are important qualities for social workers to have, MASW Executive Committee member Teoh Ai Hua says that social workers need in-depth knowledge, understanding and training in their field.



Social work is a real profession that requires qualified and properly-trained people,' says MASW Executive Committee member Teoh. Photo: Teoh Ai Hua

He feels that it is ironic that society doesn't pay much attention to social work or social welfare services.

"In the health service, health professionals must be trained and qualified before they're hired. In education, teachers must be trained before being sent to the schools.

"But nobody asks if the social workers are trained or qualified – perhaps it's because many associate such services with poverty and assume anyone can do the job. We must change that mindset.

Social work is a real profession that requires qualified and properly-trained people, " says Teoh who also serves in the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) – Asia Pacific as honorary secretary and represents the region in the IFSW Ethics Commission.

Teoh is also Chair of the Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work and honorary treasurer of the International Council of Social Welfare – South-East Asia and Pacific region.

Long overdue

There are many challenges that social workers in Malaysia face, says Dr Mohd Suhaimi.

"The main challenge is the absence of laws that recognise social work as a profession. This results in limited resources being allocated in the planning of social welfare services and the hiring of social workers, " he says.

A study by the Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit

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revealed a ratio of one social worker for every 8,756 Malaysians, far behind the ratio of developed countries such as the United States (1:490), Australia (1:1,040), United Kingdom (1:3,025) and Singapore (1:3,448).

A caseload study conducted by the MASW in 2014 and 2015 on 29 social welfare officers in children's services in KL and Selangor found that the each social worker had a caseload of between seven and 92 cases at any one time, with the average caseload being 53 per social worker.

The Social Work Bill was drafted in 2010 and for the past decade, the Social Welfare Department, Women and Family Development Ministry and MASW along with Unicef, have pushed for the tabling of the law to inject professionalism into social work and encourage competency-based international practices.

The proposed law would also ensure that all social workers are adequately trained and properly compensated. The law would also elevate the profession and encourage more to pursue social work as a career with a well laid out pathway.

However, the law has been yet to be tabled in parliament.

Earlier this year, women's minister Datuk Seri Rina Harun said that she would see that the bill is tabled by the end of 2020. But she isn't the first to pledge to get the bill tabled. In 2017, then Women, Family and Community Development minister Datuk Rohani Abdul Karim promised to table the act in Parliament. Last year, former deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail also pledged the same after acknowledging that the shortage of social workers was among the main reasons for inefficient efforts to address social problems in the country.

Dr Wan Azizah also revealed that social workers often had to undertake tasks that were beyond their job scope, thus taking their focus away from their role as social protectors.



NGOs too, due to limited funding, aren't able to hire sufficient social workers, notes WCC's service manager Mangleswary Subramaniam.

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“Because there is a lack of social workers, each would have to handle more cases. And, despite the gravity of their work, social workers are often not highly paid,” she admits.

WCC has six trained social workers and two licensed counsellors. On average, each social worker handles 25 clients per month, including in-person, phone counselling, and follow-up interventions.

“WCC sees 500-600 new clients and receives 700-800 new calls for counselling or obtaining information, every year. But for the first half of 2020, we’ve already received 600 calls for a range of issues,” says Mangleswary.

Currently, 47% of their cases comprise domestic violence, adult and child sexual assault. During the MCO, there was an 82% increase in domestic violence cases than previously, with domestic violence alone comprising 34% of the total cases handled during the MCO. Other most received calls, comprising 18% of cases handled during this time, were for financial aid, shelter and mental health support.

“Dealing with the disadvantaged, marginalised, disabled and elderly in society is not an easy task, and social workers need to be properly trained and also have the proper qualifications,” says Mangleswary.

The Social Work Bill is important because it regulates social workers in the country and ensures their services are in accordance with the IFSW Workers’ code of conduct and ethics, she adds.

The enactment of the Social Work Bill, says Teoh, is crucial as it will also change public perception about social work and social workers.

“Young people would be encouraged to pursue social work if it is recognised as a career that has prospects. Then, more people can be helped. There are many universities and colleges in Malaysia and overseas where social work education, from diploma to PhD, is available,” he adds.

Dedicated to help

Most social workers enter the field because of passion and job satisfaction from helping others, says Yayasan Chow Kit (YCK) centre manager, Ratna Dewi Raja Kamal Vadiveloo.

But because of the workload, it is not uncommon for social workers to feel burnt out.

“There is an obvious shortage and as a result, many social workers may be overworked and underpaid. Their income ranges, depending on the organisation they’re with,” says Ratna Dewi

NEWS



Most social workers enter the field because of passion and job satisfaction from helping others, but it's not uncommon for them to feel burnt out because of the workload,' says YCK centre manager, Ratna Dewi. Photo: Yayasan Chow Kit

YCK looks after the needs of underprivileged, undocumented, stateless, migrant and refugee children below the age of 18, who live mainly in the Chow Kit area in KL. They provide homeschooling at its two centres – Pusat Aktiviti Kanak-Kanak (ages 7-12), and Kuala Lumpur Krash Pad (teenagers) – for those who can't attend government schools because of documentation or citizenship issues. It also provides a safe house – Pusat Jagaan Baitul Amal (PJBA) – for abused, abandoned or unaccompanied children (up to age 12) where they can have a caring, nurturing, friendly family environment.

YCK has only six social workers across its three centres.

“We’ve a mix of refugee, migrant, undocumented and stateless children at the centre as YCK accepts all children regardless of their background – Malaysian and non-Malaysian, ” says Ratna Dewi. “They aren’t orphans or street children, but most have B40 parents who are daily wage earners or odd-job workers. They send their children to the centre to ensure they’re safe and occupied with positive activities since Chow Kit is a red-light district and children may be exposed to high-risk activities. They face many issues including urban poverty, lack of access to basic education, and a high likelihood of engaging in delinquent behaviour, ” she explains.

Ratna Dewi hopes that the Social Work Bill is given serious consideration by lawmakers as it will enable social problems to be addressed more comprehensively.

“More advocacy, training, and networking can be done, and it would attract more individuals to pursue the profession, ” she says.

According to Unicef whose mandate is to protect children from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation, social workers are an essential service.

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A social worker from the Department of Social Welfare counsels (using pictures) a girl who has been abused by a family member. Photo: Unicef

In order to carry out this mandate, there needs to be a well-functioning child protection system and the most important component of this system is the social services workforce – both government and non-government social workers – yet, it is often under-resourced, under-staffed, and under-supported.

The recognition of social work as a valid profession that requires proper education, and the provision to register social workers will lead to better salary schemes for social work graduates,” adds Dr Mohd Suhaimi.

In many other countries, social work is regulated through legislation. The Social Work Bill, once enacted, will mean only those with the necessary qualifications can be recognised as a “registered social worker”.

“This is important because social work involves dealing with complex social issues such as child abuse, domestic violence, youth delinquency, addiction, mental health, migrant workers, refugees and undocumented persons, which require qualified and full-time professionals,” says Teoh.

The number of social workers in the country is low compared to countries that have laws on social work. In the public sector, the number of positions for graduate level social development officers under the Social Welfare Department and the Health Ministry’s medical social workers is less than 900. Some social work graduates are employed in public agencies like the National Anti Drugs Agency, Social Security Organisation and the Department of Community Development. The number in NGOs is much less due to budget constraints.

“MASW estimates that over 8,000 social work graduates have been produced by local public universities since 1979 with about 400 students graduating every year. If we estimate only 15% of the graduates are working as social workers, that would be about 1,200, which is close to the social worker positions available in the country,” Teoh says.

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“We don’t have an exact figure on the number of social workers in the country since they don’t have to be registered currently. However, it is estimated to be around 1,200,” he says.

“Developed countries may see a ratio of one social worker to 600 persons. If we use the current estimate of 1,200 social workers in the country, it means that we only have four social workers per 100,000 population (refer to chart). To meet the lowest of the developed countries, we need at least 9,800-10,000 registered social workers,” says Teoh.

The number of clients that a social worker can reasonably serve at any one time depends on the nature of the cases.

Ratio of social workers to population in countries with social work legislation

Country	Number of registered social workers	Year info reported	Population in year info reported	Ratio of social worker to 100,000 population
Hong Kong	25,079	2020	7,502,211	334
US	700,000	2018	327,000,000	214
New Zealand	8,019	2018	4,886,000	164
Britain	106,000	2019	66,650,000	159
South Africa	18,213	2015	55,390,000	33
Singapore	1,707	2017	5,696,506	30



Source: Malaysian Association of Social Workers
TheStargraphics

“In child protection and juvenile justice work, the recommendation from the US, Britain and Australia is one social worker to 15 cases for those involving intensive work in assessment and intervention; and 15-30 cases involving coordination-monitoring work,” reveals Teoh.

“In Britain, the average number of cases social workers handled in 2019 was 12-33 across different local councils according to government statistics from the annual children’s social work workforce census. The average caseload was 16.9,” he says.

FEATURE

HOW HAVE CANCER PATIENTS BEEN COPING DURING THE PANDEMIC?

The Star, 9 July 2020

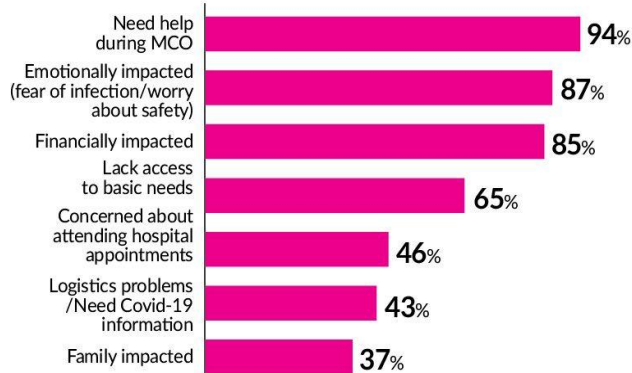
While the Covid-19 pandemic has hit everyone hard, breast cancer patients – particularly those from lower income groups – were especially vulnerable during the movement control order (MCO) period.

A survey of over 200 breast cancer patients from three hospitals was conducted under the Patient Navigation Programme (PNP), a collaboration between Cancer Research Malaysia and the Ministry of Health and their community partners.



Patient navigators at Hospital Umum Sarawak.
Photo: Cancer Research Malaysia

What breast cancer patients from low-income households face during the Covid-19 pandemic



Source: Cancer Research Malaysia

TheStar graphics

It reveals that 25% of patients were in crisis, with issues such as needing help during MCO (94%), being emotionally impacted with fear of infection or worry about their safety (87%), being impacted financially (85%), lacking access to basic needs (65%), having concerns about attending hospital appointments (46%), needing Covid-19 information and having logistics problems (43%) and feeling their families were impacted (37%).

Out of the women surveyed, 77% have a monthly household income under RM3,000, with half of these having zero income or a monthly household income under RM980.

FEATURE



One in four women from lower income households were in crisis during the MCO, says Dr Teo. Photo: Cancer Research Malaysia

“Women from lower income households are especially vulnerable during the MCO with one in four in crisis,” says Cancer Research Malaysia (CRM)’s chief scientific officer Prof Dr Teo Soo Hwang.

“This is an ongoing problem that the PNP seeks to address. We help overcome barriers to diagnosis and treatment to improve the survival rate of breast cancer patients,” she adds.

This is crucial because with cancer, the quicker treatment begins, the better a patient’s chance of survival.

According to Dr Teo, late diagnosis, poor access or continuity of treatment is linked to up to half the breast cancer deaths in Malaysia.

Prior to the implementation of the PNP, one in two patients would face a late stage of discovery, while one in seven patients would drop out of treatment.

Now, 90% of the patients under their care showed up for their hospital appointments during the MCO, despite being afraid of contracting Covid-19. Patients’ continuity of treatment also increased from below 85% to 95%.

Throughout the MCO, the patient navigators (nurses and social workers) have been working closely with patients, hospitals, public services and the community to increase the survival rate of the women who were undergoing their cancer treatments.

Puan R, a 46-year-old unemployed breast cancer patient, says that having a patient navigator has helped her family and her get through the MCO, not just health-wise, but also in many other ways.

“My husband, a lorry driver, was a sickly person and often ill. Getting a job was difficult and I used to earn some money by making kuih for a nearby stall. We barely managed to make ends meet,” she says.

The mother of two reveals that her patient navigator is easy to communicate with and understands what she is going through.

FEATURE

“She even gave me tips on how to talk to my children so that they would help with the finances.

“My son and daughter eventually took up sales jobs in a shopping mall and they now take care of the housing loan. My eldest son takes care of the utility bills,” she says.

Puan R’s patient navigator also arranged for an interview with the welfare department officer to waive some of her hospital bills. She also helped with her MySalam application and got it approved.

“Now, I can cope with paying for transportation to the hospital and ward admissions,” she says. “She also arranged for food baskets from the Welfare department during the MCO which was a big relief!” she adds.

By helping patients overcome the barriers of timely diagnosis and continuing treatment, half of the breast cancer deaths in Malaysia can be prevented, says Dr Teo.

“Face-to-face counselling and support sessions aren’t possible during this time, so we followed up with our patients over the telephone and used our online system to collect data and track patients’ progress,” PNP manager Maheswari Jaganathan says.

“We have also collaborated with local community partners to coordinate deliveries of groceries, cash and other essential items to all the patients in need.

“The Welfare Department’s help centre and their district officers have been very helpful and attentive to our patients’ needs throughout the MCO,” she adds.

For Madam S, a 51-year-old unemployed breast cancer patient, the MCO was a turbulent time but help came in the form of her patient navigators.

“My son is the sole breadwinner. It was really hard and food was scarce because of financial problems.



Patient navigators also help patients in crisis get access to basic needs.
Photo: Cancer Research Malaysia

FEATURE

When I felt like giving up, I prayed and helped knocked on my door in the name of Kavi, Hani“, (patient navigators), Ain, Norlia (nurses) and Dr Hidayati (medical officer), ” she says, adding that without the groceries, food and financial help from the welfare department arranged by the PNP team, she and her family “would not have survived”.

To date, the PNP has been implemented in hospitals in four cities: Klang (Selangor), Seremban (Negri Sembilan), Kuching (Sarawak) and Kota Kinabalu (Sabah), with more in the pipeline nationwide.

Cancer Research Malaysia’s work is supported entirely by donations and grants. For more info, visit: cancerresearch.my



Collaborations with community partners are important in making sure patients make it to treatments, says Maheswari. Photo: Cancer Research Malaysia

FEATURE

MEDICINES: BRANDED VERSUS GENERIC

NST, 31 July 2020

MEDICINES are substances used to prevent, control or treat diseases. Did you know that there are two types of medicines sold in the market – branded or sometimes called innovators and generic medicines?

What do these terms mean?

Innovator medicines are the original branded medicines which are first sold in the market.

These innovator medicines are patented by the company that discovered the new medicine.

During the patent period, other pharmaceutical manufacturers are not permitted to manufacture the same medicines until the patent expires. The patent may last for 20 years or more.

Generic medicines, on the other hand, are medicines that have the same active ingredients as the innovators and are marketed after the patent period has expired. As a copy of the innovators, generic medicines exert the same pharmacological effects as the innovators.

Similarly, the dosage, mode of administration, and action of the medicines, as well as the therapeutic effect and side effects of these generic medicines are also the same as the innovators.

Both innovator and generic medicines are available in Malaysia. Depending on their group types, they are sold at the clinics, retail pharmacies and supermarkets.

Medicines exert their intended pharmaceutical effects when used as directed. Some medicines come in the same shape and colour but have different names and use. This can easily confuse patients or consumers.

Therefore, patients or consumers are advised to know the names and the purpose of the medicines they are taking.

After the patent period has expired, the manufacturers of generic medicines are given the right to determine the form, shape, colour, and taste of their generic copy marketed under their brand as long as the medicines remain effective, safe and of similar quality.

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Generic medicines may look different from the innovators but work in the same way. Picture: Designed by Racoool_studio / Freepik.

EQUALLY EFFECTIVE

Although generic medicines and their original innovators may look different, most importantly, for both, the active pharmaceutical ingredients remain the same.

This is also essentially the reason why medicines should not be identified solely by their brand name, shape, colour, or taste.

Panadol®, for example, is an innovator medicine. The active ingredient contained in Panadol® is paracetamol. After the patent for Panadol® expired, various generic medicines with the same active ingredient, manufactured by other pharmaceutical companies, came into the market such as Paracil®, Fepril®, and Actimol®.

FEATURE

Generic medicines do not have the same trade name as the innovator medicines because the trade name of the latter has been copyrighted.

Although generic medicines are the copy of their original innovator medicines, there are still misconceptions surrounding them.

Among the misconceptions is that innovators are of better quality, safer, and more efficacious compared to generic medicines. This assumption is inaccurate because all medicines, including generic medicines, have to comply with regulatory standards before they can be registered with the Drug Control Authority (DCA) of Malaysia.

This is to ensure that the quality, safety, and efficacy of all medicines marketed in Malaysia are not compromised. In addition, bioequivalence studies have been a mandatory requirement for the registration of all generic medicines.

A bioequivalence study aims to ensure that the rate of absorption and availability of a generic medicine in the bloodstream is similar to that of the original innovator. Therefore, a generic medicine that has passed the bioequivalence study should have equal therapeutic effects as its innovator. Generic medicines registered with the DCA of Malaysia are as good as their original innovators because they have fulfilled the requirements of being

safe, efficacious, and of quality through the bioequivalence studies.

Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) is one of the key criteria in the manufacturing of generic medicines. The National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agency (NPRA) being the secretariat of the DCA of Malaysia regularly inspects and evaluates pharmaceutical factories in the country as well as abroad to ensure that medicine manufacturers adhere and comply with international GMP standards.

Although generic medicines may differ in terms of their shape, colour, and inactive excipients such as dyes and flavouring agents, they work in the same way as the innovators as they have the exact same amount of active ingredient or ingredients and absorption rate and concentration in the bloodstream when taken.

Patients or consumers should not be worried about the inactive excipients as these do not affect the quality, safety, or efficacy of the medicines.

Generic medicines cost less than their innovators and this is often thought to be due to their substandard quality. The reason generic medicines are less expensive is because the manufacturers of generic medicines do not have to invest in the research and development (R&D) phase (usually performed for innovator medicines) which typically incurs the highest cost.

FEATURE

The availability of the same generic medicines from different manufacturers following the expiration of the innovator's patent further drives down the price due to price competition in the market.

In conclusion, there is an increasing demand for generic medicines globally. The availability of generic medicines that are therapeutically comparable to innovator medicines provides affordable essential medicines to consumers or patients and certainly reduces the cost of healthcare.

Please call the National Pharmacy Call Centre (NPCC) at the toll-free line 1800-88-6722, weekdays from 8 am to 5 pm if there are any inquiries regarding the use of medicines.



Generic medicines cost less than their innovators.
Picture: Designed by drobotdean / Freepik.

BIM MEMBER INSTITUTIONS

- Malaysian Pharmaceutical Society (MPS)
- Royal Institution of Surveyors Malaysia (RISM)
- The Institution of Engineers Malaysia (IEM)
- Pertubuhan Akltek Malaysia (PAM)
- Malaysian Medical Association (MMA)
- Malaysian Dental Association (MDA)
- Malaysian Institute of Planners (MIP)
- Veterinary Association Malaysia (VAM)
- Malaysian Institute of Interior Designers (MIID)
- Malaysian Society of Soil Science (MSSS)
- Malaysian Association of Social Workers (MASW)
- The Plastics & Rubber Institute of Malaysia (PRIM)
- Agricultural Institute of Malaysia (AIM)
- The Chartered Institute of Building Malaysia (CIOBM)
- Institute of Landscape Architects Malaysia (ILAM)
- Institute of Internal Auditors Malaysia (IIAM)
- Institut Bahan Malaysia (ICOMM)
- The Chartered Institute of Logistics And Transport Malaysia (CILTM)
- International Institution of Plantation Management (IIPM)

CORPORATE AFFILIATE

- Malaysian Institute of Human Resource Management