

BE PRUDENT IN USE OF ANTIBIOTICS, SAYS HEALTH DG

The Malay Mail, 16 November 2017

SERI KEMBANGAN, Nov 16 — The Malaysian Ministry of Health has classified antibiotic resistance a primary health care threat of the 21st century.

Director-General of Health Datuk Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said overuse and misuse of antibiotics is to be blamed.

“Although antibiotic resistance is a process that occurs naturally, there has been a significant acceleration over the years due to overuse,” he said.



Speaking at the National Antibiotic Awareness Campaign 2017 in Serdang Hospital, Dr Noor urged both healthcare professionals and the public to be prudent in use of antibiotics.

He also advised the public not to pressure doctors to prescribe them antibiotics for viral infections and fevers.

“Antibiotics will not work against most infections like cough and colds as they are most likely caused by viruses,” Dr Noor said.

Dr Noor said the growing number of infections such as pneumonia and tuberculosis (TB) are becoming harder to treat due to antibiotic resistance.

Dr Noor also highlighted the crucial role healthcare professionals play in championing the antimicrobial stewardship initiatives at their healthcare practice.

“Antibiotics will be seized whenever they are handled in contravention of the Poisons Act 1952 and the use of it is closely monitored,” he said, adding that online antibiotic sale is an offence.

Quoting the National Antibiotic Resistance Surveillance Report, Dr Noor said the *Klebsiella pneumoniae*, a form of bacterial pneumonia has become 2.6 per cent more resistant to antibiotics as compared to 1.7 per cent in 2013.

Dr Noor said if nothing is done, by 2050 infections by antimicrobial resistant superbugs could kill an extra 10 million people each year worldwide, overtaking cancer.

“Not only that, it’ll cost the world an estimated US\$100 trillion (RM 418 trillion.),” he said.

This means the public and government hospitals would have to carry more economic burden as more expensive antibiotics have to be developed.

“Longer hospital stays are also needed to cure resistant bacterial infections which increase healthcare cost and indirectly cause a loss of productivity,” he said.

“Mortality risk and the risk of spreading infections would also increase.”

World Health Organisation (WHO) representative to Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore, Dr Ying Ru Lo said over the next 10 years cumulative death in the West Pacific region will be largely driven by antibiotic resistance.

She said that globally, 480,000 people develop multi-drug resistant TB each year, and drug resistance is starting to complicate the fight against HIV and malaria, as well.

“Without effective antibiotics, the success of major surgery and cancer chemotherapy would be compromised,” she said.

Calling antibiotic resistance a multi sector crisis, Dr Ying said farmers and the food industry should stop using antibiotics routinely to promote growth and prevent disease in healthy animals.

In combating this problem, Dr Ying said WHO has also developed a surveillance system to monitor the emergence of antibiotic resistance in both animals and humans.