

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN  
MUKA SURAT : 14  
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

## MMA gesa projek perintis 6 bulan sebelum sistem syif

**Kuala Lumpur:** Persatuan Perubatan Malaysia (MMA) menggesa kerajaan melakukan projek perintis selama enam bulan di beberapa kemudahan Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) sebelum melaksanakan sistem syif.

Presidennya, Dr Azizan Abdul Aziz, berkata kerajaan perlu menangani isu kekurangan pekerja kesihatan sebagai langkah pertama, selain memastikan sebarang perubahan dalam waktu bekerja tidak akan menjejaskan elaan doktor.

Sekiranya kerajaan bercadang meneruskan pelaksanaan sistem syif, beliau berkata, ia perlu memastikan isu tenaga kerja, latihan dan pampasan tidak dikompromikan.

"Pelaksanaan sistem syif memerlukan tenaga kerja yang mencukupi. Beberapa pusat mungkin memerlukan 200 hingga 300 peratus lebih ramai doktor untuk melaksanakannya.

"Justeru, sistem syif itu sepatutnya dilaksanakan di pusat yang memiliki bilangan mencukupi bukan sahaja dari segi doktor tetapi juga petugas kesihatan yang lain," katanya dalam satu kenyataan, semalam.

Dr Azizan berkata, keperluan latihan juga wajib dipenuhi ketika melaksanakan sistem syif.

"Segala usaha harus dilakukan untuk memastikan bakal pakar dilengkapi dengan baik dan cekap kerana mereka memikul beban berat penjagaan serta keselamatan pesakit," katanya.



Lukanisman (kanan) merasmikan Majlis Pelancaran Hari Pembantu Perubatan Peringkat Kebangsaan 2024 di Putrajaya. (Foto Samadi Ahmad/BH)

## Syor Pembantu Perubatan naik pangkat kekal di hospital sama

**Putrajaya:** Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) sudah mengemukakan permohonan kepada Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam (JPA) bagi mengekalkan jawatan Pembantu Perubatan (PP) Terlatih (Pakar Teknikal) yang dinaikkan pangkat, terus berkhidmat di hospital sama.

Timbalan Menteri Kesihatan, Datuk Lukanisman Awang Sauni, berkata perkara itu sudah dikaji Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Datuk Dr Muhammad Radzi Abu Hassan dan dibawa untuk pengetahuan Menteri Kesihatan, Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad.

Beliau berkata, cadangan itu adalah berdasarkan maklumat yang diterima dan perbincangan

sudah diadakan dengan JPA.

"KKM melihat perkara ini sebagai sesuatu yang positif dan berharap perjawatan fleksi itu diluluskan oleh JPA bagi meningkatkan kualiti perkhidmatan," katanya pada Majlis Pelancaran Hari Pembantu Perubatan Peringkat Kebangsaan 2024, semalam.

Hari Pembantu Perubatan adalah acara tahunan disambut pada 10 Mac setiap tahun. Sambutan Hari Pembantu Perubatan Ke-13 Peringkat Kebangsaan 2024 bertema 'Bakti Mulia, Masyarakat Sejahtera, Aspirasi Malaysia Madani.'

Seterusnya, Lukanisman berkata, KKM mempunyai perincian serta ada kewajaran me-

wujudkan jawatan PP gred fleksi dalam bidang kepakaran, bagi mengekalkan pegawai berpengalaman dan berkemahiran dalam bidang-bidang pengkhususan untuk meneruskan kualiti perkhidmatan.

Kini, penempatan PP yang dinaikkan pangkat adalah mengikut kekosongan perjawatan. Sekiranya tiada kekosongan perjawatan bidang pengkhususan, PP itu terpaksa dipindahkan ke fasiliti atau bidang lain yang ada kekosongan perjawatan.

Situasi itu merugikan bidang kepakaran, khususnya KKM, dan penyampaian perkhidmatan berkualiti serta selamat oleh PP Terlatih (Pakar Teknikal) kepada pesakit akan terjejas.

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN  
MUKA SURAT : 18  
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

## Flat Tasek 64 antara lokasi panas penyakit tibi di Johor

**Pasir Gudang:** Flat Tasek 64, Bandar Seri Alam di sini yang dihuni kira-kira 10,000 penduduk dikenal pasti antara lokasi panas penyakit batuk kering atau tibi di negeri ini.

Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri (ADUN) Johor Jaya, Liow Cai Tung, berkata pada tahun lalu, sebanyak lapan kes tibi dicatat dengan satu kematian yang membabitkan penduduk di flat itu.

Beliau berkata, flat berkenaan dihuni penduduk tempatan, termasuk komuniti Sabah dan Sarawak yang berhijrah ke negeri ini, selain warga asing.

Katanya, kegagalan sesetengah penduduk yang tidak membuat saringan lebih awal mengakibatkan penularan penyakit itu, terutama membabitkan ahli keluarga masing-masing.

"Kes tibi menular jika mereka tidak menjalani saringan atau gagal mendapatkan rawatan pada masa tepat dan sesuai.

"Flat ini antara yang memiliki penduduk yang ramai dengan 22 blok di sini. Saya berharap kesedaran berkaitan penyakit tibi ini dapat dipertingkatkan dari semasa ke semasa," katanya selepas Karnival Kesihatan anjuran Unit Tibi Klinik Kesihatan Masai di Dewan Tasek 64 di sini, petang kelmarin.

Antara pengisian karnival termasuk gotong-royong, zumba, ceramah kesihatan, perkongsian bekas penyakit tibi, pemeriksaan kesihatan dan pertandingan mewarna.

Cai Tung berkata, inisiatif pengedaran karnival itu memberi peluang penduduk flat terbabit membuat saringan kesihatan, termasuk imbasan x dengan percuma.

"Usaha kakitangan Klinik Kesihatan Masai turun padang menjalankan karnival sehari itu diharap dapat mempertingkatkan kesedaran ramai berkaitan tibi dan bertindak lebih awal sebelum terlewat," katanya.

Sementara itu, Dr Haidar berkata, batuk berpanjangan, demam, berpeluh, kurang selera makan dan susut berat badan antara simptom penyakit berkenaan.

"Mereka yang ada simptom ini perlu menjalani pemeriksaan kesihatan segera bagi memastikan adakah ia tibi, sekiranya boleh membuat langkah pencegahan awal daripada merebak," katanya.

AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO  
MUKA SURAT : 6  
RUANGAN : LOKAL

## PENYAKIT JARANG JUMPA

# 'Saya hidap sakit Pycnodysostosis'

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### Kuala Lumpur

"Kepada golongan penyakit jarang jumpa seperti saya, jangan putus asa. Ini bukan noktah untuk kita," kata Muhammad Idris Mohamed Ibrahim, 31, yang menghidap Pycnodysostosis iaitu penyakit yang mempunyai ciri-ciri fizikal berbeza.

Katanya, sejak berusia dua tahun dia disahkan mempunyai penyakit jarang jumpa apabila mempunyai struktur tulang yang abnormal.

"Kuku dan gigi saya berbeza dengan orang normal. Tulang saya mudah rapuh menyebabkan senang mengalami kecederaan malah boleh patah walaupun hanya ditolak dengan perlahan.

"Setakat ini tiada ubat atau rawatan untuk penyakit yang saya alami ini namun ia tidak mematahkan semangat saya untuk meneruskan kehidupan," katanya ketika ditemui di Sambutan Hari Penyakit Jarang Jumpa di Hospital Tunku Ampuan Besar Tuanku Aishah Rohani, Hospital Pakar Kanak-kanak (HPKK) di sini, baru-baru ini.

Menurut Muhammad Id-

ris penyakit yang ditanggungnya menyebabkan dia menerima ejekan serta dipulaukan terutama ketika zaman persekolahan hanya kerana mempunyai fizikal berbeza berbanding orang yang normal.

Tambahnya lagi, majoriti pesakit penyakit jarang jumpa sukar mendapat peluang pekerjaan kerana majikan yang khuatir dengan potensi mereka.

Ditanya harapannya di masa hadapan, Muhammad Idris berharap masyarakat dapat memberi peluang sama seperti orang normal kepada penghidap penyakit jarang jumpa kerana mereka juga ada kemampuan dan kemahiran tersendiri walaupun kelainan ciri fizikal.

Sementara itu Naizai-thull Fahya Mujamil, 45, ibu kepada Muhammad Afiff Eshan Mohammad Fadzly, 16, yang menghidap Apert Syndrome berkata, bukan mudah untuk kekal tabah lebih-lebih lagi apabila ada jeli-ngan mata memandang anaknya yang istimewa fizikal itu.

Menurutnya, Muhammad Afiff Eshan mempunyai masalah tengkorak kepala serta jari kaki dan tangan yang bercantum.

"Ibu bapa perlu

kental sebenarnya, kalau tidak kental akan mudah murung. Terutamanya apabila berada di tempat awam, hati saya jadi sedih apabila ada memandang ke arah anak dengan pandangan 'pelik'.

"Tidak seronok apabila orang menganggap anak saya pelik. Anak saya pun sudah besar, jadi dia semakin perasan bila orang memandang dia. Jika itu berlaku depan mata saya, saya akan terus beri motivasi dan keyakinan kepadanya," katanya.

Sementara itu, Pakar Perunding Genetik HPKK, Dr Keng Wee Teik berkata, pakar perubatan penyakit ja-

rang jumpa masih kurang di Malaysia.

Menurutnya, negara harus melatih lebih ramai pakar genetik di Malaysia untuk merawat mereka yang mengidap penyakit jarang jumpa ini.

"Hanya ada 13 doktor yang ditauliahkan sebagai pakar genetik klinikal di Malaysia dan sememangnya masih tidak cukup.

"Terdapat 3.5 peratus hingga 5.9 peratus seluruh populasi dunia menghidap penyakit jarang jumpa termasuk di Malaysia," katanya.



IDRIS ketika ditemu bual pada Majlis Sambutan Hari Penyakit Jarang Jumpa 2024 di Hospital Pakar Kanak-kanak UKM. - Gambar NSTP/GENES GULITAH

## 13,000 berdaftar dengan KKM

**Kuala Lumpur:** Terdapat lebih 13,000 pesakit penyakit jarang jumpa berdaftar di bawah Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) setakat ini.

Presiden Persatuan Penyakit Jarang Jumpa Malaysia (PPJJM) Nadiyah Hanin Abdul Latif berkata, kesedaran mengenai penyakit jarang jumpa yang semakin meluas di negara kita menjadi punca kepada peningkatan pesakit berdaftar.

Katanya, melalui kesedaran masyarakat yang berkembang itu membuat lebih ramai keluarga dan pesakit yang mencari bantuan serta nasihat pakar berjaya didiagnos dengan tepat.

"Terdapat kira-kira 7,000 jenis penyakit jarang jumpa yang diiktiraf Pertubuhan Kesihatan Sedunia (WHO) dan hanya tiga hingga lima peratus mendapat bantuan atau sokongan perubahan manakala 95 hingga 97 peratus tiada penawar.

"Terdapat lebih 490 jenis kes penyakit jarang jumpa dalam pangkalan data KKM," katanya kepada Harian Metro.

"Tulang saya mudah rapuh menyebabkan senang mengalami kecederaan" Muhammad Idris

Menurut Nadiyah, antara jenis penyakit jarang jumpa di Malaysia ialah Prader-Willi Syndrome, Spinal Muscular Atrophy, Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy dan Lysosomal Storage Diseases.

Katanya, penyakit berkenaan antara terbanyak terdapat di Malaysia iaitu setiap kumpulan mempunyai lebih 100 pesakit.

Beliau berkata kira-kira 70 peratus di antara 7,000 jenis penyakit jarang jumpa berpunca daripada masalah genetik.

"Namun masalah genetik tidak semestinya datang dari keturunan tetapi juga dari segi masalah DNA.

"Ini kerana mungkin berlaku mutasi pada kandungan dalam badan yang menyebabkan seseorang menghidap penyakit jarang jumpa," katanya.

Ditanya mengenai kesan psikologi pesakit penyakit jarang jumpa, beliau berkata tekanan emosi sememangnya ada ditambah lagi dengan beban psikologi, kerohanian, perubatan dan sosio-ekonomi.

"Sebagai contoh, ramai pesakit penyakit jarang jumpa dalam kalangan beliau sukar mendapat pekerjaan malah ada yang di-buang kerja.

"Sebenarnya, ini bukan perkara asing kepada komuniti ini apabila sering diketepikan kerana wujudnya stigma di dalam sosio-ekonomi yang menjadi punca kesihatan mental mereka turut terjejas.

AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO  
MUKA SURAT : 16  
RUANGAN : LOKAL

## Cadangan jawatan fleksy pembantu perubatan diteliti JPA

**Putrajaya:** Cadangan Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) untuk mewujudkan jawatan fleksy bagi pembantu perubatan terlatih supaya kekal berkhidmat dalam bidang kepakaran mereka sedang diteliti Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam (JPA), kata Timbalan Menteri Kesihatan Datuk Lukanisman Awang Sauni.

Beliau berkata, perincian dan kajian berkaitan cadangan itu telah dilaksanakan oleh Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan Datuk Dr Muhammad Radzi Abu Hassan sebelum dibawa ke JPA tahun lalu.

Pada masa kini, katanya, penempatan pembantu perubatan yang dinaikan pangkat adalah mengikut kekosongan perjawatan.

"Jika tiada kekosongan mereka terpaksa dipindahkan ke fasiliti atau bidang

lain yang mempunyai kekosongan perjawatan dan perkara ini merugikan pihak KKM," katanya kepada pemberita ketika ditemui selepas menghadiri Sambutan Hari Pembantu Perubatan ke-13, di sini, semalam.

Lukanisman berkata, pertukaran ke fasiliti atau bidang lain secara tidak langsung menjejaskan penyampaian perkhidmatan yang berkualiti dan selamat kepada pesakit.

"Kita nampak satu sudut yang positif berkenaan hasrat ini dan berharap agar perjawatan fleksy ini sekiranya lulus akan dapat meningkatkan kualiti perkhidmatan," katanya.

Beliau berkata, gred-gred fleksy yang akan diwujudkan dalam bidang pengkhususan juga boleh membantu mengekalkan pembantu perubatan yang berpengetahuan dan berkemahiran tinggi.

Dalam ucapannya, beliau berkata, pihak KKM telah menambah jaringan hubungan profesion bagi pembantu perubatan dengan beberapa negara luar termasuk Physician Associate di Kanada dan Australia serta pegawai klinik di Afrika Selatan.

**"Pertukaran ke fasiliti atau bidang lain secara tidak langsung menjejaskan penyampaian perkhidmatan yang berkualiti"**

AKHBAR : UTUSAN MALAYSIA  
MUKA SURAT : 7  
RUANGAN : DALAM NEGERI

## Laksana projek perintis sebelum buat sistem syif - MMA

**PETALING JAYA:** Persatuan Perubatan Malaysia (MMA) menggesa kerajaan melaksanakan projek perintis di beberapa fasiliti kesihatan awam (KKM) selama enam bulan sebelum beralih kepada sistem syif seperti dicadangkan persatuan itu sebelum ini.

Presidennya, Dr. Azizan Abdul Aziz berkata, sekiranya kerajaan mahu melaksanakan sistem anjakan buat pegawai perubatan kesihatan, maka perlu memastikan tenaga kerja dan latihan.

Beliau berkata, sistem peralihan sepatutnya dilaksanakan di fasiliti yang bukan sahaja mempunyai bilangan doktor mencukupi, tetapi termasuk pegawai kesihatan lain.

"Keperluan latihan juga wajib dipenuhi ketika melaksanakan sistem syif. Segala usaha harus dilakukan untuk memastikan bakal-bakal pakar dilengkapi dengan baik dan cekap kerana mereka memikul beban berat penjagaan pesakit dan keselamatan," katanya dalam kenyataan.

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES  
 MUKA SURAT : 5  
 RUANGAN : NATION / NEWS

MULTI-AGENCY EFFORT

# ANTI-VAPE RULES FOR SCHOOLS MULLED

Education, Health ministries to curb e-cigarette trend among students

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**T**HE Education Ministry may establish special regulations to curb the increasing prevalence of vaping among students.

Education director-general Azman Adnan said the ministry would collaborate with the Health Ministry to arrest the trend of students freely purchas-

ing vape products.

"We will work with the Health Ministry to examine proposals (special regulations) regarding the increasing trend of students using vapes as well as cigarettes.

"This is among the Education Ministry's commitments to ensure that this matter can be addressed, and initiatives have been implemented by the ministry along with various agencies, including the National Anti-Drug Agency.

"In schools, there are already rules regarding these matters (vape, cigarettes and drugs), and teachers have been given mandates to curb the spread of vaping and smoking," he said.

Azman was speaking to the media after observing the first day of school at SMK Sultan Ismail, here yesterday.

Present was Johor Education and Information Committee chairman Aznan Tamin.

Azman said police were cooperating with the ministry to tackle this issue.

"The discipline issue involves everyone, not only teachers and school management but also par-



Azman Adnan

ents and the community in raising awareness of the dangers of cigarettes and vape.

"The education process to address such disciplinary issues has long been implemented by the

Education Ministry, and we see positive developments because of the strong commitment from parents who do not want their children to be involved with cigarettes, vape and drugs," he said.

On March 5, the Penang Consumers Association (CAP) said about 15 female students in each school were found vaping, with three to four of them addicted to nicotine.

CAP education officer N.V. Subbarow had said CAP found that the popularity of vape and electronic cigarettes had grown at least threefold since the Covid-19 pandemic.

AKHBAR : THE STAR  
MUKA SURAT : 11  
RUANGAN : NATION

THE STAR, MONDAY 11 MARCH 2024

Nation 11

# Repurposing drugs in dengue fight

## Hepatitis C medicine and others being tested in search for quicker treatment

By FAZLEENA AZIZ  
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**PETALING JAYA:** A number of repurposed antiviral drugs, including one that is being used to treat Hepatitis C, is currently being evaluated as potential treatment against dengue, according to Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi).

DNDi South-East Asia director Jean-Michel Piedagnel pointed out that the antiviral Nelfinavir is one of these promising drugs currently under evaluation by DNDi and Dengue Alliance partners.

He mentioned Nelfinavir as one of the potential drugs used in the drug repurposing.

In principle the steps involved in drug repurposing are a quicker method in the fight against dengue. It includes identifying the drug, getting approval for the study protocol, conducting clinical

trials and then getting approval from the Food and Drug Administration.

"Researchers from the Dengue Alliance are gathering all the needed safety and efficiency data to make an evidence-based decision on which drug that eventually will be selected for the next phase, and tested on humans during the clinical trial.

"We anticipate being able to decide and announce this drug candidate within a few weeks. But Nelfinavir has not yet been named as a candidate for clinical development," he told *The Star*, adding they are currently at the preclinical stage of 1 and 2.

Recently Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad revealed that the drug repurposing method is being used as part of the latest approach in the fight against dengue.

On this, Piedagnel clarified that

it was likely the minister was referring to the mandatory pre-clinical studies currently being conducted by Dengue Alliance researchers to evaluate the drug candidates, including Nelfinavir.

As such, he said once all pre-clinical data is collected, they can determine which antiviral drug will undergo clinical trial.

Piedagnel added that the most effective strategy in reaching the goal is by developing a treatment combination of different drugs.

For this reason, Dengue Alliance researchers are in parallel looking for a host-directed therapy that could be administered alongside this antiviral drug.

"Drawing from their previous highly successful collaboration with the MOH in delivering a new and effective Hepatitis C treatment, we are optimistic about replicating the success.

"The goal is to create a treatment for dengue that is affordable, equitable and accessible.

"Using repurposed drugs ... could have a low risk of failure, shorter research and development cycle, high success rate, and less investment needed as these drugs have been approved by the regulatory bodies," Piedagnel said.

International Medical University deputy vice-chancellor of Research Prof Datuk Dr Lokman Hakim Sulaiman said drug repurposing is indeed a quicker method in the fight against dengue.

However, he agreed that such a method could have been explored earlier as there was no drug yet for dengue.

"Drug repurposing is faster because there is no need for long tedious safety studies.

"Since the drug is already in use for treatment of other diseases/

infection, therefore it is also less costly," he said, adding that the focus should be on dengue as the disease is most endemic in the country.

On the conditional approval given for Takeda's Qdenga dengue vaccine, Dr Lokman suggested that those living in highly endemic dengue areas, especially in the Klang Valley, should consider taking it.

The former Health deputy director-general (public health) added that it was not just about individual efforts but more of the whole of society and whole of government efforts to curb the spread of dengue.

As of March 9, a total of 457 daily cases with 585 active outbreak localities have been recorded nationwide.

From Jan 1 until March 3, a total of 19 deaths have also been recorded.

## MMA: Conduct shift system pilot project first

By KHOO GEK SAN  
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**PETALING JAYA:** The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) has urged the Health Ministry to conduct a six-month pilot project first before implementing the shift system in public healthcare.

MMA president Dr Azizan Abdul Aziz said a pilot project would comprehensively assess the long-term implications of the proposed shift system on the healthcare system.

"If the government plans to go

ahead with implementing a shift system for public healthcare doctors, it should only be implemented in facilities with a sufficient number of healthcare workers," she said in a statement yesterday.

Dr Azizan said such a system would only be effective in facilities with sufficient manpower as some centres may need two to three times as many doctors, necessitating a thorough analysis of the distribution of the public healthcare workforce to address the prevailing issue of maldistribution.

She stressed the need to ensure future specialists are well-equipped and competent in shouldering the heavy burden of patient care and safety.

Regarding remuneration, the MMA asserted that income from allowances must not be affected.

Dr Azizan warned that removing the on-call allowance for medical officers could result in a 20% pay cut or more, impacting junior doctors already grappling with the rising cost of living.

The MMA, therefore, proposed a flexi allowance of at least

RM1,500 for medical officers to mitigate financial implications and curb the trend of resignations among doctors in public healthcare.

Last month, the MMA called on the government to adopt a three-shift system daily along with the introduction of a flexi allowance, to prevent burnout among doctors and further brain drain.

It said the government could emulate the European Working Time Directive, where doctors typically work an average of 48 hours a week.

AKHBAR : THE STAR  
MUKA SURAT : 11  
RUANGAN : NATION

## Flexi posts for medical assistants being studied

**PUTRAJAYA:** The proposal by the Health Ministry to create flexi positions for trained medical assistants to continue serving in their areas of expertise is being examined by the Public Service Department (JPA), says Datuk Lukanisman Awang Sauni.

The Deputy Health Minister said the details and study related to the matter had been carried out by Health director-general Datuk Dr Muhammad Radzi Abu Hassan before being brought to JPA last year.

He said currently, the placement of promoted medical assistants is based on vacancy.

"If there is no vacancy, they will have to be transferred to another facility or field that has a vacancy, and this will be to the disadvantage of MOH," he told to reporters after attending the 13th Medical Assistants Day celebration here, Bernama reported.

He said a change to another facility or field would affect the quality of service to patients.

Meanwhile, Lukanisman said there is a positive aspect regarding flexi staffing, adding that if the proposal is approved, it will improve the quality of service.

He said flexi grades will be created in niche areas to retain knowledgeable and highly skilled medical assistants in specialised fields to improve the quality of service in health facilities to the community.

In his speech earlier, he said MOH has increased the network of professional ties for medical assistants with several foreign countries.

"Through this network of relationships at the global level, we managed to open up the best space and platform in recognising and improving this profession," Lukanisman said.



AKHBAR : THE SUN  
MUKA SURAT : 4  
RUANGAN : NATIONAL

## Proposal for medical assistants being studied

**PUTRAJAYA:** The Health Ministry proposal to create flexi positions for trained medical assistants to continue serving in their areas of expertise is being examined by the Public Service Department (PSD).

Deputy Health Minister Datuk Lukanisman Awang Sauni said the details and study related to the proposed creation of the positions had been carried out by Health Director-General Datuk Dr Muhammad Radzi Abu Hassan, before being submitted to PSD

last year.

He said currently, the placement of promoted medical assistants is based on vacancies.

"If there is no vacancy, they will have to be transferred to another facility or field that has a vacancy, and this will be to the disadvantage of the ministry," he said after attending the 13th Medical Assistants Day Celebration yesterday.

Lukanisman also said a change to another facility or field would affect the quality and safety of trained

medical assistants (technical experts).

"We see a positive angle regarding this wish and hope that this flexi staffing, if approved, will be able to improve the quality of service."

Lukanisman said flexi grades will be created in niche areas to retain knowledgeable and highly skilled medical assistants in specialised fields to improve the quality of service at health facilities.

In his speech, he said the ministry has increased the network of professional relationships for

assistants with several foreign countries, including physician associates in Canada and Australia, and clinical officers in South Africa.

"Through this network of relationships at the global level, we managed to open up the best space and platform in recognising and improving this profession," he said, adding that the recognition also shows that medical assistants in Malaysia are comparable with other professions around the world.  
- Bernama

## RM6.5m approved for hospital upgrading works

**KUALA TERENGGANU:** The Health Ministry has approved an allocation of RM6.5 million for repair and upgrading works of specific blocks at the Sultanah Nur Zahirah Hospital.

In a statement issued in conjunction with Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad's visit to the hospital on Saturday, the ministry said the allocation obtained under an emergency procurement will be used to upgrade existing blocks at the hospital.

"The minister conducted a survey of ongoing projects within the hospital, including Block D, which is experiencing significant roof leakage issues. The RM6.5 million allocation is intended for upgrading the existing blocks in this hospital and the Health Ministry Training Institute to accommodate services affected by the leakage problem in Block D," read the statement.

During the visit, Dzulkefly also inspected the maternal and child treatment centre to assess the potential to upgrade it into an additional obstetrics ward, in a bid to alleviate overcrowding in the current ward.

The ministry said the upgrading project will be assessed for inclusion in the ministry's application under Rolling Plan 5 of the 12th Malaysia Plan.

Dzulkefly also evaluated the immediate medical equipment requirements at the hospital and approved an allocation of RM380,000 for the acquisition of medical equipment for the pediatrics department, which includes procurement of incubators, fluid management systems and vital sign monitoring equipment.

He also agreed to allocate RM120,000 for the urgent purchase of ultrasound machines needed at the Kuala Kemaman Health Clinic.

Dzulkefly was also briefed on the HSNZ Development Plan, which involves new and ongoing upgrading projects as well as projects planned for the short and long term.  
- Bernama