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GENERAL
MEDICINE

Elective report

Malaysia's health care system is a two part system which consists of a government and a private health care system. This is a system which works as to make health care accessible to the poor and to provide first class management to those who can afford more.

The private sector of healthcare has grown rapidly since the eighties. The consequences of this, two thirds of medical personnels are now working in private hospitals. This increases the workload in government-run hospitals. — Really?

However, so far, this system has served well compared to other countries. A measure of the performance of our health care system is by the use of health indicators such as Infant Mortality Rate(per 1000 live births), life expectancy at birth and under 5 years mortality rate(per 1000 live births)

Infant mortality rate (IMR) of Malaysia has improved significantly since the 1970s. It has been falling from 10.4 per 1000 in 1995 to 5.8 in 2003. IMR of Malaysia is now comparable to developed countries such as the UK.

This system has worked well so far and should not be changed. The objective will be to try to upgrade the level of public healthcare to a comparative level as private care.

Health promotion

During my time in Normah specialist centre, I learnt that patient consultation is really important. Doctors and other health professionals have a giant task of promoting healthy lifestyle. Malaysia is already rated as one of the most obese countries in ASEAN. This is bad as obesity is related to a number of illnesses. A study which was done in rural areas around Kuching and Samarahan in 2011 showed that more that 49% of the people were obese. The sample was people more than 16 years old in 238 households.

In a nutshell, promoting a healthy lifestyle should not solely be focused in the urban areas, but as well as rural areas.

Apart from that, compliance in taking medications is an issue. More so in regards with chronic diseases such as hypertension and diabetes, where patients do not normally get symptoms. Hence, they will be at risk of heart diseases.

This is why building rapport with patients is necessary and with a good relationship with patients, comes compliance. The risk of heart diseases should be explained thoroughly to the patients accordingly.

Most patients take supplements as well. An online survey conducted by The Nielsen Co, an international market research firm has found that 52% of Malaysians take supplements.

People take supplements, mostly multi vitamins because to replace the inadequacy of their daily

diet. However, researches done have shown that multi vitamin supplements do not bring the same effect as compared to a healthy diet. The reason is not known, however theories are such that the multivitamins are missing the bioactives that are found in actual food. Quoting a professor from the University of Toronto, "the science is that people who eat food like tomatoes, carrots, vegetables, tend to live longer. You can't just crush all the stuff from the vegetables into something called vitamin A or vitamin E."

Therefore, explaining this misconception that multivitamins can replace a healthy and balanced diet altogether is important in promoting patients to strive for a healthy and balanced diet.

One of the main cardiac conditions in Malaysia is coronary artery disease. According to a local newspaper, 20% of adults (older than 18) has high cholesterol. This has been increasing over the years.

Apart from that, hypertension is a problem as Malaysian foods are mostly fried and high in salt.

An inactive lifestyle is a major risk factor for coronary disease. Regular, moderate to vigorous physical activity helps prevent heart disease. Many Malaysians work a 9-5 job and the only exercise they get is the walk out for lunch. It's time for us Malaysians to add a little exercise to our lives.. nothing strenuous – just simple things like parking the car a little further than you normally would, using the stairs instead of the elevator, or even walking up the escalator instead of just enjoying the ride.

