

Dengue patients to go into special wards

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KUALA LUMPUR: All suspected dengue cases will no longer be placed in general wards with other patients.

Director-General of Health Tan Sri Dr Ismail Merican said from now on, all suspected dengue cases will be placed in special wards or bays managed by a dedicated group of trained doctors and nurses.

The patients would be monitored very closely during the first 24 hours from the onset of the fever because this was the time when their clinical condition could deteriorate.

“A dedicated team would pick up the early warning signs faster and institute appropriate treatment, such as fluid resuscitation or admitting the patient to the Intensive Care Unit,” he said during the NSTLive session at Balai Berita yesterday.

He said although the dengue situation had not reached an alarming state, the concern was for the large number of cases and preventable deaths this year, especially in Selangor.

Between Jan 1 and June 13, this year, he said 23,056 dengue cases were reported nationwide with 57 deaths compared with 18,894 cases and 39 deaths during the same period last year.

He said 66 per cent of the deaths could have been pre-

vented if patients had come in early for treatment.

He said that despite all that had been done by the ministry, including getting cooperation from the relevant ministries and relaying messages through the media, the public had not yet been motivated enough to take the action the ministry would like them to.

“Malaysians should know there is no specific treatment for dengue fever and the only way to get rid of the problem is to get rid of the mosquitoes and breeding sites.”

The ministry’s “10 minutes a week” campaign, for example, is aimed at getting everyone to inspect their homes once a week for at least 10 minutes, to get rid of breeding sites inside and outside the house.

Dr Ismail attributed the increase in dengue cases to global warming because it increased the activity of the vector mosquito.

He also said the health ministry’s enforcement team would go hard on those who breed mosquitoes instead of letting them off with a warning.

“We have given enough warning to flouters of the law and we will go hard on them. We just hope there is no interference from anybody when we bring errant people to book.”

DENGUE STATISTICS				
(Order by state with the highest number of cases)				
<i>State</i>	<i>2009 cases (Jan 1 – June 13)</i>	<i>Deaths</i>	<i>2008 cases (Jan 1 – June 13)</i>	<i>Deaths</i>
Selangor	11,948	39	7,390	14
Kuala Lumpur & Putrajaya	2,088	7	2,179	4
Perak	1,894	1	1,863	1
Penang	1,429	Nil	717	Nil
Johor	1,349	2	1,376	7
Sarawak	811	Nil	586	Nil
Kelantan	641	Nil	609	5
Terengganu	559	Nil	778	2
Sabah	480	2	491	2
Kedah	475	Nil	543	Nil
Negri Sembilan	473	5	506	Nil
Pahang	446	1	556	Nil
Malacca	324	Nil	273	Nil
Perlis	120	Nil	66	Nil
Labuan	19	Nil	29	Nil
TOTAL	23,056	57	17,962	35

