

'80PC OF CASES DETECTED AT STAGE 3'

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Khairy urges women to be aware of early signs, risk factors of ovarian cancer

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MORE than 80 per cent of ovarian cancer cases in Malaysia are detected only at stage 3 or above.

Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said it was a problem that needed to be looked into and there was a need for early detection through better screening.

"That is unfortunately not too reliable right now, even in other countries.

"The best way is to create awareness of early signs before we get a more effective screening method for ovarian cancer," he said at a press conference yesterday.

He urged women to look out for



Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin speaking at a press conference in Petaling Jaya yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

ovarian cancer risk factors such as advanced age, family history, obesity, weight loss, bloated stomach and pelvic pain.

Pantai Hospital Cheras consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist Dr Ida Lilywaty Md Latar said there was no reliable screening method for ovarian cancer to ensure early detection and prevention.

She said this resulted in late presentation in the majority

of cases.

"More than 80 per cent of ovarian cancer cases are detected at stage 3 and above for the first time.

"Unlike cervical and breast cancer, which are relatively preventable with early detection through reliable screening methods like a Pap smear and mammogram, respectively, screening for ovarian cancer is generally not reliable and not widely avail-

able, making early diagnosis difficult and challenging."

On Saturday, artiste Adibah Noor died of stage 4 ovarian cancer at Gleneagles Hospital in Ampang. She was 51.

Her father, Mohd Omar Zainal Abidin, 89, told Harian Metro Online he did not know Adibah had ovarian cancer.

On medicine shortage, Khairy said it was expected to be stabilised next month.

He said random checks by the ministry revealed that 85 per cent of 47 health facilities and premises had reported at least one medicine shortage. The checks involved seven private hospitals, 10 private health clinics and 30 community pharmacies.

"The shortage mostly involves medicine for common illnesses like cough, cold and fever and antibiotics for children.

"As I said last week, the ministry has agreed to loan medicines to any private health facilities that are fac-

ing shortages.

"But I expect the situation to stabilise in the next month or so," he said.

He said the ministry was monitoring the shortage based on feedback on active ingredients and products from health facilities and the pharmaceutical industries.

He said up to June 16, feedback on the availability of 36 active ingredients, involving 1,231 products, had been requested from product registration holders.

"We have received feedback for more than 50 per cent of the products from product registration holders.

"The list of products that are seeing a shortage as well as the alternative products has been shared with associations for hospitals, private clinics, community pharmacies and dental clinics for their reference.

"It will be updated on a weekly basis, depending on the situation."



Dr Ida Lilywaty Md Latar