

Medical cannabis producers must register with DCA

COMPANIES producing medical cannabis can register their products with the Drug Control Authority (DCA) before they're approved for sale in Malaysia, says Deputy Health Minister Datuk Dr Noor Azmi Ghazali.

"If there are any groups with enough scientific proof on the use of medicine containing cannabis extract, they can register their products with the DCA which then permits the products to be sold in Malaysia.

"The Health Ministry does not reject any study on the efficacy of medicinal cannabis. If there are products concerning medical cannabis that are approved overseas, the said company can register their products in Malaysia," he said.

He added that medical cannabis falls under the purview of the Dangerous Drugs Act (DDA), the Poisons Act and the Sale of Drugs Act.

"It does not stop the imports, sale, supply, and mass production of cannabis extract for

medical purposes, as long as the activity is in accordance with the law," said Dr Noor Azmi during Oral Question and Answer session.

Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman (Muda-Muar) then asked what would happen to people using medicinal cannabis and ketum for treatment.

"(It is already legal in) Thailand and even in Indonesia, the process to approve medicinal cannabis has started.

"Doctors here are ready to prescribe, but according to the law, criminal charges can be made against the doctor and even patients, as well as their guardians," said Syed Saddiq.

Dr Noor Azmi conceded that there are benefits to using medical cannabis to treat depression, cancer, epilepsy and other diseases, but stressed that until present laws are amended, those who are using the drug will be charged.

"If we are still stuck with previous laws, we

can't do anything. That's why we need everyone's cooperation to amend them. Studies have shown that these products can be used and are efficient in treating certain illnesses.

"The issue here is the stigma. When we mention cannabis, people are still scared. But those involved are patients who are benefiting from it, so they shouldn't be arrested or jailed," added Dr Noor Azmi.

Presently, he said, there were no clinical trials on any products containing cannabis extract for those who are using it for medical purposes in Malaysia.

Section 6 of the DDA prohibits the possession of cannabis, which is an offence punishable by five years in prison or a fine not exceeding RM20,000.

Section 39A of the DDA states that those found with over 50g are punishable with five years of jail and at least 10 strokes of the rotan.