

Help for women with menopause

Health experts: It should not be a taboo subject, there are treatment plans

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PETALING JAYA: Although menopause is natural and inevitable, many suffering women are reluctant to seek treatment such as hormonal therapy due to misconceptions, said Khairy Jamaluddin.

The Health Minister said many women lived with hot flushes, sleep disturbances, joint pains and mood swings but did not seek help even if these symptoms affect their quality of life.

“Unfortunately, menopause is often not talked about in the Asian culture, as it is associated with having a negative connotation with regard to a woman’s ageing process. Simply put, it is a time stamp.

“Women are made to accept menopause as a natural and inevitable process in their lives, and many distressed menopausal women are reluctant to seek help,” he said at the launch of the Clinical Practice Guidelines (CPG) of the Management of Menopause here yesterday.

Malaysian Menopause Society president Dr Ho Choon Moy called on women not to be afraid of menopause as she had patients in their 70s and 80s who were still energetic, physically active and enjoying life.

She said early initiation of menopausal hormone therapy (MHT)

CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES **Management of MENOPAUSE**
Malaysia



benefited the heart, bone, brain, vagina, skin, and fat distribution.

Dr Ho said more should be done to create this awareness among the 1.5 million women aged between 50 and 59 in Malaysia.

“The first 10 years of menopause are the window of opportunity for women to reap the maximum benefits of MHT.

“If we reach out to them, we will have a healthier generation of menopausal women 10 to 20 years from now,” she added.

Khairy also said a woman’s health during her post-menopausal years

carries enormous weight on the nation’s health and economic productivity.

“It’s vital for healthcare workers to make sure she is guided and managed appropriately,” he said, adding robust clinical data had indicated that MHT remained effective for menopausal symptoms.

Lauding the CPG as “timely”, Khairy said it marked a historical achievement in Malaysian healthcare milestone.

He also urged healthcare professionals to promote counselling and health education on MHT.

Successful launch:

Dr Premitha (second from right) at the launch of the CPG book. With her are (from left) Dr Ho, president of the College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Academy of Medicine of Malaysia, Prof Datuk Dr Siti Zawiah Omar and Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society of Malaysia president Dr Hoo Mei Lin. —

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The CPG was produced with input from more than 50 doctors specialising in obstetrics and gynaecology, as well as healthcare workers.

It includes information on menopausal symptoms, clinical assessment, treatments, and their effects.

CPG committee chairperson Dr Premitha Damodaran said women who experience menopause are also at a higher risk of physical, social, psychological, sexual and mental health problems.

“We are looking at women who will spend one-third of their lives

without oestrogen hormones, ending their fertility.

“Our data shows that 60% of menopausal women had hot flushes, and 70% had joint pains. A high percentage of them were too shy to tell their doctors that they also had dryness in the vagina and other sexual health problems.”

She noted women with menopause record a higher prevalence of serious diseases, including coronary heart disease, osteoporosis, cancer, and non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol, making the remainder of their lives more challenging.

The CGP, said Dr Premitha, is the localisation of relevant procedures to suit multi-ethnic women, including religious aspects and considerations, and it has evidence-based recommendations and solutions to help healthcare workers ask pertinent questions and care for menopausal women better.

The CGP will be available to healthcare workers.

“It will also be accessible to the public later next month via Android and iOS in a more straightforward language in English, Malay, Chinese, and Tamil so that it reaches women of all levels and their co-living men. The awareness must be there even before menopause happens,” she added.