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Khairy: Low vaccine registration due to 'wait-and-see' approach



Tuesday, March 23rd, 2021 at [News](#)

The issue is particularly predominant among rural communities who may not have access and awareness to the programme, says minister

by S BIRRUNTHA / pic by RAZAK GHAZALI

MALAYSIANS' "wait-and-see" attitude and ignorance about the National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme (PICK) are why the country's vaccine registration rate is still low.

Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Khairy Jamaluddin Abu Bakar (*picture*) said the issue is particularly predominant among rural communities who may not have access and awareness to the programme.

He added that his party would take into account all the factors and strengthen the communication aspect on vaccines to increase the registration rate from time to time.

"There are people in rural areas who do not know what PICK is all about, while those who are aware are still taking the 'wait-and-see' approach before they register.

"Some people have become more accepting of the vaccines after their immediate family members and close friends have received their first dosage," he said at a joint press conference with Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Adham Baba on PICK's latest updates yesterday.

Nevertheless, the minister said he is confident that the registration rate will increase from time to time, as people get more information and education on the importance of vaccination.

Meanwhile, Khairy said he will meet with the Covid-19 Vaccine Supply Access Guarantee Special Committee (JKJAV) to determine whether there are precautions for certain groups to take the Sinovac vaccine due to the absence of clinical data.

"So far, we are confident in the Sinovac vaccine. It has shown efficacy rates of about 51% to 90% in phase three of its clinical trials, and Malaysia's National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agency has given the conditional approval for the shot.

Khairy, who is also the coordinating minister for PICK, confirmed that the government has procured nearly 60% of total doses of Covid-19 vaccines as of now.

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He added that the government has received extra doses of the Covid-19 vaccines from several makers following negotiations last year.

"Yesterday, we signed an agreement to obtain another 20% of the Pfizer Inc-BioNTech SE vaccine.

"In addition to that, we have secured another 12 million doses of the Sinovac vaccine, the one which is made in our country," he noted.

On another note, Dr Adham said the Health Ministry has classified the AEFI (adverse event following immunisation) into two categories, namely local and systemic reactions.

He explained that local reactions are side effects that occur at the injection site, while systemic reactions involve other organs in the body.

He added that the most frequently reported side effects so far are pain on the injection site, reported by 80% of recipients, while over 10% recipients reported swelling, itching and redness at the injection site.

He said 60% of the recipients reported fatigue and lethargy following the vaccination, while 50% reported headaches, muscle and joint pain, and fever.

Nevertheless, Dr Adham said Malaysia currently has not recorded any unusual or worrying side effects such as death or heart failure, after undergoing vaccination.

In the meantime, he noted that vaccine recipients who show adverse side effects will be taken to hospital, after observations have been made at the vaccination centre.

"The administration of the second dose of the vaccine to this group will be done in the hospital because they need better observation, he said.

Dr Adham also announced that the government has allocated special financial assistance amounting to RM10 million to compensate individuals who may suffer from the harmful effects of Covid-19 vaccines.

He noted that the assistance will be offered to both locals and foreigners in the country.

The assistance involves two categories, namely RM50,000 for recipients who receive serious side effects and RM500,000 in the event of permanent disability or death due to the Covid-19 vaccine.

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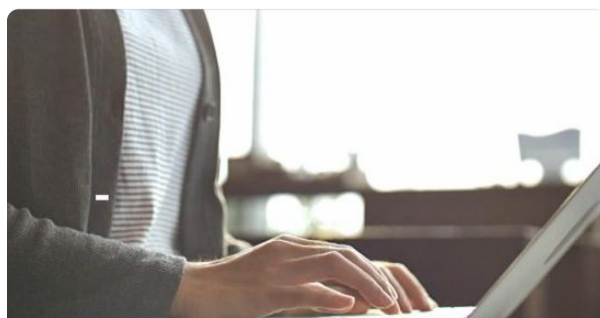
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