

## Use proper channels to report bullying, MMA tells doctors

By **AMALIA AZMI** - March 20, 2024 @ 6:43pm



*The Malaysian Medical Association said the Health Ministry must also look into why doctors are using social media to expose incidences of bullying. - NSTP/File Pic*

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) has urged doctors to use official channels to report bullying in the workplace.

Its president, Dr Azizan Abdul Aziz said public healthcare doctors can lodge a report via the Public Complaints Management System, the Health Ministry's MyHelp portal, MMA's HelpDoc, or lodge a police report instead of seeking justice via social media.

"It is troubling to see poison pen letters circulating on social media, however, it is time the Health Ministry looked into the reasons why its doctors are taking to other means, such as social media, to be heard.

"For victims of workplace bullying, every moment endured is significant. It can be disheartening when reports on bullying are met with sluggish responses and minimal action, which can result in perpetrators evading consequences," she said, adding that one likely reason for poison pen letters is a lack of trust in the system.

She cited an incident in September 2023, where doctors from a Sabah public hospital utilised MMA's HelpDoc channel to report a clear case of bullying involving specialists and medical officers.

She said MMA escalated the matter to the ministry and was informed that the case was being investigated.

However, the same complainants recently contacted MMA to report that the bullying has not stopped.

Azizan said the ministry should standardise procedures for reporting and managing bullying cases, along with setting timelines for investigations and resolution.

She also said the ministry should limit the powers of heads of departments and hospital directors to ensure a fair hearing of bullying cases.

"The establishment of the Healthcare Work Culture Improvement Taskforce in 2022 to review the work culture in public healthcare was a step in the right direction.

"However, there was no follow-through with the implementation of any of its recommendations. The government must explain why, especially if it involved taxpayer money," she said in a statement today,

Azizan said MMA has proposed several solutions to combat bullying but they were not adopted even though they did not involve any additional costs.

"One suggestion was to hold hospital directors and department heads accountable for any cases of bullying."

She said a failure to resolve bullying exacerbates this issue.

Last week, the Perak Health Department said it was [probing allegations of sexual harassment](#) against a doctor at the hospital.

The investigation was launched after the department received a poison pen letter in the mail on Feb 28. The doctor named in the poison pen letter has lodged a police report on the matter.