

Be thankful to the press for highlighting the issue

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I REFER to the news reports on senior doctors bullying housemen and male doctors sexually harassing female trainee doctors, “Heartless docs, sickening acts” (*Sunday Star*, July 29).

It has since been reported that the Health Minister has directed thorough probes be carried out on all known cases to ensure fairness and justice, “[Ministry to probe sex abuse claims by housemen against dept head](#)” (*The Star*, July 30).

But even before the probe is carried out, we are hearing that bullying and sexual harassment in hospitals have been overblown and sensationalised. It is common sense, I think, that when newspapers and social media start talking about bullying and sexual harassment, these incidents would probably have become quite widespread.

In fact, the first question the minister should have asked is how past incidents of bullying and harassment were handled.

If these incidents had been treated sternly and fairly, I am quite sure this problem would have been nipped in the bud.

If the problem has grown and is now a subject of public attention, why did certain quarters immediately blame the press for sensationalising the issue? Has the ministry done any study and gathered any findings to come to this conclusion?

In my opinion, there is no image to protect or reputation to tarnish. Only the truth will settle that.

It is time for us to realise that the “power relation” between senior and trainee doctors is lopsided and unequal. It is difficult for the powerless to make the accusation but it is quite easy for the powerful to defend themselves.

Perhaps trainee doctors in the past were too afraid to highlight their predicaments, thinking that they would not get a fair hearing.

Perhaps they believe that they would get justice in the new Malaysia. So, instead of blaming the press for highlighting this issue, we should be thankful to them.

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