

Minister Tiong, Here's The Evidence That Smoking Causes Cancer — MMA

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MMA shows Tiong King Sing the evidence that smoking causes cancer, citing data from the WHO, Johns Hopkins Medicine, and the US CDC, among others. "We also find the Tourism Minister's criticisms of former Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin to be unfair."



smoking. By Pixabay.

We refer to recent media reports on the Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister's comments concerning the Generational End Game (GEG).

The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) expresses concern over the minister's apparent lack of fundamental understanding of the hazards of smoking, despite abundant scientific evidence compiled over years of research from all over the world.

Smoking is a serious public health concern globally. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), tobacco kills more than eight million people each year, including an estimated 1.3 million non-smokers who are exposed to second-hand smoke. Tobacco also kills up to half of its users who don't quit.

In Malaysia, it is estimated that 20,000 deaths attributed to smoking occur each year.

We urge the minister to thoroughly examine the available facts.

We also find the tourism minister's criticisms of former Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin to be unfair. In our evaluation, KJ demonstrated excellence in his role as a health minister, with his leadership crucial in steering the country out of the pandemic.

Notably, he displayed courage in making unpopular decisions for the greater good, as evidenced by his initiative — the GEG, aimed at preventing future generations of smokers. It is regrettable that this forward-thinking effort faces opposition rather than support from the current government.

According to the WHO, tobacco is the world's leading cause of preventable death, claiming 1.6 million lives annually in Southeast Asia alone. "The region accounts for a significant proportion of global adult smokers and smokeless tobacco users."

It said that tobacco use is closely linked to a range of non-communicable diseases, including cancers, cardiovascular diseases, chronic lung diseases, and diabetes mellitus.

A study aimed to estimate the burden of several types of cancer attributable to tobacco smoking in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) for 2018, using data from GLOBOCAN 2018 found that tobacco smoking was responsible for 121,849 new cancer cases in ASEAN in 2018 (106,858 male and 14,991 female cases).

The study also noted a decrease in cancer incidence and mortality compared to a previous study in 2012, attributing this to more ASEAN member states adopting effective tobacco control measures.

Johns Hopkins Medicine states that smoking is linked to an increased risk for more than 12 types of cancer and is responsible for about 90 per cent of all lung cancers. Smoking has been known to cause cancer since at least the 1940s, with epidemiological studies showing a clear connection. Tobacco products and secondhand smoke contain many chemicals that damage DNA, thereby increasing the risk of cancer.

According to the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), cigarette smoking is the single largest cause of cancer worldwide. It remains the leading cause of cancer death in women, with lung cancer being particularly prevalent. Studies suggest that tobacco use is associated with a range of cancers.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), smoking tobacco products, including cigarettes and cigars, causes almost nine out of every ten cases of lung cancer.

Tobacco use can cause cancer almost anywhere in the body, including the bladder, blood (acute myeloid leukemia), cervix, colon and rectum, esophagus, kidney and renal pelvis, liver, lungs, bronchi, and trachea.

Additionally, cigarette smoke contains poisons that can weaken the body's immune system, making it harder to kill cancer cells and allowing them to grow uncontrolled.

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