



MMA expresses concern over alternative methods to manage diabetes

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The Malaysian Medical Association says it could worsen the health outcomes of affected patients.



Dr Azizan Abdul Aziz said any changes to the treatment regimen for diabetes patients must be closely monitored to ensure that their health does not deteriorate.

PETALING JAYA:

The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) has expressed concern over the health ministry's decision to increase the use of alternative ways to manage diabetes – to address the human insulin shortage – particularly the impact it could have on patients.

In a statement, MMA president Dr Azizan Abdul Aziz said patients with complex health conditions, including those with Type 1 diabetes, pregnant women, and those with serious kidney failure, are particularly vulnerable.

Any change to their treatment regimen must be closely monitored to ensure that their health does not deteriorate, she added.

Azizan also said they worried over the potential worsening health outcomes.

The criteria for switching from human insulin to alternative treatments must be carefully adhered to but it should not replace the individualised care that each patient deserves, she said.

The risk of worsening glycaemic control and the potential for increased complications must be mitigated through rigorous follow-up and patient education.

Last night, the ministry said it was taking several approaches, including increasing the use of insulin analogues and oral hypoglycaemic agents to help deal with the human insulin supply shortage, which was triggered by one of its many suppliers running into production issues.

On Wednesday, health portal Code Blue reported that an insulin shortage crisis has hit government health facilities nationwide, due to reported supply issues with a local manufacturer.

Code Blue was made to understand that the supply of human insulin is especially dire in Selangor, with reports of shortages in Kuala Lumpur, Johor, Melaka, and Kedah.

Bandar Kuching MP Dr Kelvin Yii had also raised the alarm over what he said was a recurring insulin shortage, calling it a serious threat particularly to diabetic patients in vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, low-income individuals and those in rural areas.

Today, MMA said the current crisis underscored the need for a more robust and diversified supply chain for essential medications like insulin.

The MMA urges the health ministry to expedite the identification of alternative manufacturers and to work towards ensuring that such shortages do not recur in the future, she said.

She called for the ministry to establish a nationwide committee to oversee the management of stock and supply of essential medicines.