

# Junior doctors accuse MMA of playing down bullying cases

Predeep Nambiar - May 11, 2022 7:30 AM



*The Hartal Doktor Kontrak group says there have been four reports of alleged sexual abuse of doctors within the past week.*

GEORGE TOWN: The Hartal Doktor Kontrak (HDK) group is upset over a Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) statement that there are only a handful of serious bullying cases involving junior doctors.

A HDK spokesman said the MMA was out of touch with reality.

MMA president Dr Koh Kar Chai, in making the [statement](#), also said bullying cases were sorted out internally and that "harsh words" from seniors against juniors were expected during training because of the stress of the job and to ensure competent performance by trainee doctors.

The HDK spokesman, who asked to be identified as Dr Syed, said the MMA's statement was troubling as it mentioned only "severe cases".

"What about the not-so-severe cases? Does the health ministry allow mild to moderate bullying of house officers? If so, what are the cut-off points that separate mild, moderate and severe cases of bullying?"

"Saying only a handful are bullied greatly downplays the problem and invalidates other people's trauma. For example, within this week, we had four reports of sexual abuse and assault by the infamous Dr S and accounts of abuse posted on Twitter."

Syed told FMT that MMA's use of the word "handful" showed it viewed the abuse suffered by junior doctors as non-existent. This was why housemen continued to suffer despite repeated reports, he said.

He said MMA's talk of internal resolutions was of no use when victims were labelled derisively as "kaki report".

He called for probes by an independent committee, saying the current system of investigation allowed leaks that made whistleblowers identifiable.

Syed said seniors must stop "trash-talking" housemen and use kind and supportive words in training junior doctors.

"Being harsh perpetuates the cycle and passes on the trauma to the incoming generation of doctors," he said. "We cope with our patients' trauma enough. Let's not cause more to our colleagues."

"You lose nothing by being kind and teaching well. Harsh treatment of housemen should stop. This is not the 1960s."