

THE STRAITS TIMES

Malaysia: Expert concerned those using Covid-19 self-test kits not reporting results



People crossing a street in Kuala Lumpur on Dec 3, 2021. PHOTO: EPA-EFE

PUBLISHED DEC 13, 2021, 9:27 AM SGT

PETALING JAYA (THE STAR/ASIA NEWS NETWORK) - Those who test positive for Covid-19 through self-test kits and do not report it to the Health Ministry as required by law are making it hard for the health authorities to track and assess the pandemic in Malaysia, warn experts.

This comes as Penang welfare committee chairman Phee Boon Poh said the state had reason to believe that some people there might choose to try to weather out their affliction without informing the authorities.

This, he added, made it hard for the health authorities to accurately gauge the Covid-19 situation.

He said Penang might currently see a lower average number of between 200 and 300 cases daily compared with before, but "this does not mean that we can take it easy".

"We believe many positive cases in the community are unreported. This makes it hard for us to track these cases," he told reporters after launching a digital food bank in Ayer Itam yesterday.

Malaysian Medical Association president Koh Kar Chai said that with the availability of self-test kits, it was of concern that many were not reporting their results when they test positive.

"Reporting all positive cases is essential for the management of the pandemic as far as public health is concerned," he said, adding that the health authorities would not be able to get a true picture of the current situation without proper data.

ST Asian Insider: Malaysia Edition

Understand Malaysia developments with bureau chief Shannon Teoh and team in weekly newsletter

Sign up

By signing up, you agree to our [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms and Conditions](#).

"This might run the real risk of losing control of the pandemic."

Dr Koh said there was also the possibility that they might not avail themselves to needed medical assistance should they suddenly develop severe symptoms while self-isolating.

"By reporting their positive status, they will be under the observation of health authorities who will advise them on the need for medical intervention if the situation requires it," he added.

Dr Samsu Ambia Ismail, a doctor from Perak, said those who tested positive with self-test kits should follow the Health Ministry's advice by reporting their results on their MySejahtera app.

He said he had encountered several situations where patients who had tested positive refused to be admitted to hospital.

"This can be due to them not wanting to be admitted alone as family and friends cannot visit them.

"So it is possible that there are a number of people out there who refuse to report their positive results from self-test kits through official channels due to various reasons," he said.

MORE ON THIS TOPIC

[Nearly 20,000 in Malaysia suffering from 'long Covid'](#)

[Malaysia's Sabah state says 20% of new Covid-19 cases are children below 12](#)

Universiti Putra Malaysia medical epidemiologist Malina Osman said that those who tested positive were required to report via MySejahtera under the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases Act (Act 342).

Those who fail to report their Covid-19-positive results are considered to have committed an offence under Section 22 of the Act and risk facing a jail term of up to two years, a fine, or both.

"The reporting is needed for surveillance and prevention purposes. Those who tested positive but declined to report may cause a possible spread of the infection," she warned.

Associate Professor Malina said there were concerns that this might lead to a new cluster or, worse, clusters.

"Reporting one's Covid-19 result is crucial for infection prevention and control," she added.

Virologist Kumitaa Theva Das said reporting on MySejahtera would provide the Health Ministry with more information on a potential variant and help it take the right measures to prevent further spread.

"By recording one's symptoms through MySejahtera, the Health Ministry may be able to identify symptoms specific to the Omicron variant, which may also allow for early detection.

"Contact tracing can also be done when cases are reported. Also, those in the vicinity of an infected person will be notified if they are a close or a casual contact and take the appropriate action," she added.

MORE ON THIS TOPIC

[All VTL travellers to Malaysia to undergo Covid-19 tests for 6 days](#)

Unreported cases, Dr Kumitaa said, might explain why there were many sporadic cases within a community.

"Reporting on MySejahtera also provides information regarding the type of vaccine and its efficacy against variants.

"For example, boosters are predicted to provide... protection against Omicron.

"If there is a breakthrough infection and this is reported on MySejahtera, it will alert the Health Ministry whether there are waning antibodies and what to do next with the particular variant," Dr Kumitaa said.

Unlock all articles at only RM3/month*

- Get access via the ST app and st.com
- Stay on top of Malaysia's latest developments, breaking news and exclusive stories
- Tap on reliable coverage of Asian and global politics, business, sports, world and entertainment

Subscribe now

*Usual price of RM15/month applies from the 13th month onwards. No contract.

Join [ST's Telegram channel here](#) and get the latest breaking news delivered to you.



Subscribe today

Get unlimited access to exclusive stories and analyses by the ST newsroom

[Choose your plan](#)

E-paper

Facebook

Instagram

RSS Feed

Twitter

Telegram

Podcasts

Youtube

- SINGAPORE
- ASIA
- WORLD
- OPINION
- LIFE
- BUSINESS

- TECH
- SPORT
- VIDEOS
- PODCASTS
- MULTIMEDIA

[Terms & Conditions](#)

[Data Protection Policy](#)

[Need help? Reach us here.](#)

[Advertise with us](#)

[Sign up for our daily newsletter](#)

[Sign up](#)

[More newsletters](#)
By registering, you agree to our [T&C](#) and [Privacy Policy](#).