



KEMENTERIAN  
SUMBER MANUSIA

# **ANALISA KERATAN AKHBAR 24 JANUARI 2017**

UNIT KOMUNIKASI KORPORAT

# ISU : KESIHATAN MENTAL

Bil	Tarikh/ Hari	Akhbar & Tajuk Berita	Ruang/ Muka Surat	Pihak Terlibat
1.	24.01.2017 Selasa	<b>THE STAR</b> Get to grips with mental health situation	Views 32	Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye Malaysian Mental Health Advisory Council

## Get to grips with mental health situation

IN our desire to be a developed and high-income nation, we must not lose sight of the importance of sound mental health development.

The 2015 National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) revealed that 4.2 million Malaysians aged 16 years and above (29.2%) were struggling with mental health issues, up from 11.2% in 2006.

It was almost a three-fold increase and mental illness is expected to be the second biggest health problem affecting Malaysians after heart diseases by 2020.

Unfortunately, stress is not only faced by adults but also teenagers and students. There is a worrying trend in mental health problems among students, with the figure rising from one in 10 individuals in 2011 to one in five in 2016.

Experts have cited anxiety and depression as the main causes. Other contributing factors include family problems, physical and cyber-bullying and stress when it comes to their studies due to pressure from parents and teachers.

We cannot deny the fact that stress is weigh-

ing down many youngsters and there is a rising level in suicidal tendency.

It was reported that 27% of the 21,256 people who contacted Befrienders Kuala Lumpur last year had mentioned suicide.

Mental health is a very misunderstood issue and many associate it with madness.

We should not simply dismiss the mentally ill as *gila*. Family members and friends must always give their full support to people who suffer from mental illness.

The Government must also take greater efforts to de-stigmatise mental illness and I believe that the community-based approach should be expanded to help overcome this problem.

Community-based care will allow patients to stay within a support system, which should be more amenable compared to institutional care.

The community should also include the patients in activities, which is a much healthier option than staying in a ward where the environment could be stressful for them.

Employers should also ensure that the work-

place is both physically and mentally healthy for all employees.

Stress, depression or anxiety of employees, if not managed well, would be costly to the workers and organisation. Work-related stress is a key issue of concern in the country and those suffering from poor mental health must seek guidance or medical attention.

Another issue that needs to be addressed is the shortage of competent experts to deal with mental health problems. At present, there are only 360 registered psychiatrists in the country's public and private sectors.

The ratio of psychiatrists to the total population in Malaysia is 1:200,000, which is much lower than the 1:10,000 recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The Government must find ways to encourage more doctors to specialise in this field as we need about 3,000 psychiatrists to achieve the ratio set by WHO.

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