



Dr Thiru showing the swollen knee joints Kenny is suffering from.

Born with haemophilia

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KOTA KINABALU: Just like any boy his age 11-year-old Kenny Sim Yi Hau loves eating chocolate candy bars and enjoys playing Playstation games. However, he is no normal child. He was born with haemophilia.

Sim, who hails from Sandakan, suffers from painful swelling on his left knee and left ankle, due to frequent bleeding into the joints (common among haemophilia patients). Hence, he walks with a limp and needs a wheelchair off and on to ease the pain.

Sim's plight drew the attention of Universiti Malaysia Sabah's Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation), Professor Dr Rosnah Ismail, during their recent collaboration with the Haemophilia Society of Malaysia in organising a "Haemophilia Health Camp 2011".

Rosnah, together with the Haemostasis Laboratory team from the UMS School of Medicine and staff of Hospital Sandakan, initiated a project to help this little boy regain his walking abilities called "A Life Without Wheelchair, Kenny! - A Haemophilia Patient."

Sim will be admitted to Hospital Kuala Lumpur from May 29 to June 3 where he would be attended to by a host of medical staff, including a haematologist, haemostasis laboratory specialist, orthopaedic surgeon, pathologists, nurses and physiotherapists.

"This is UMS' first collaborative clinical venture with the National Blood Centre in

Kuala Lumpur," Dr Rosnah said at a press conference, attended by Sim and his parents here.

"Hopefully, after initial treatment in KL and KK, he would over a period of two to three months, be able to walk and play without the need of a wheelchair," she said.

"However, there is no cure for haemophilia patients because it is genetic. We can only provide some kind of relief treatment," she added.

To date, the UMS School of Medicine is the only one in the region that offers a haemophilia diagnostic laboratory for free. The lab is open round the clock and caters to hospitals throughout Sabah and Sarawak.

It was inspired by Dr A. Thiruchelvam who, through his knowledge and expertise, helped set up the facility to conduct such diagnosis in August last year.

Haemophilia is a genetic disorder that reduces the ability of a person's blood to clot and can result in uncontrolled bleeding. It usually occurs in men and less often in women as the genes mutated in the two forms of haemophilia are on the X chromosome usually transmitted from mother to son.

Bleeding is common into joints such as knees, ankles and elbows. Sometimes bleeding into muscles or internal organs may occur.

Those interested to know more may contact Dr Muhammad Taufik (019 2899 300) or Dr Thiruchelvam (019 254 2406).



Kenny with his parents during the press conference.