

Queen Elizabeth II hospital, UMS successfully perform awake brain surgery

By **Olivia Miwil** February 12, 2026 @ 6:27pm



The neurosurgical and anesthetic team with all the operation theatre staff prior to commencement of the awake aneurysm surgery at Queen Elizabeth hospital II here recently. Pic courtesy of UMS

KOTA KINABALU: An awake brain aneurysm clipping surgery for a 57-year-old patient in Tawau was successfully performed in Sabah.

The high-risk and specialised procedure was carried out in a collaboration between Queen Elizabeth II hospital (HQE II) and Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) on Feb 6.

Led by consultant neurosurgeon Dr Mohd Sofan Zenian, the surgery was supported by a multidisciplinary team of doctors, nurses, neurophysiologists and allied health professionals.

Dr Mohd Sofan said the awake approach allows immediate detection of neurological changes during surgery.

"By operating while the patient is awake, we receive instant feedback during clip placement. If neurological changes occur, we can immediately modify our surgical strategy.

"This represents the highest level of precision and patient-centred neurosurgical care," he said in a statement.

Aneurysm clipping is a type of brain surgery used to treat a cerebral aneurysm — a weakened area of a blood vessel that has ballooned outward.

UMS consultant neuroanaesthesiologist Dr Yeap Boon Tat said the success of awake brain surgery relies heavily on expert neuroanaesthetic management.

"This achievement reduces the need for patients to seek treatment outside the state, lowering costs and improving access to high-quality care closer to home," he said, adding that the collaboration reflects Sabah's growing capacity to deliver advanced neurosurgical care locally.

Meanwhile, HQE II hospital director Dr Ferro Firdaus Ibrahim said the successful procedure reflects the top-tier standard of care provided by the hospital as a recognised centre of excellence.

"With ongoing expansion and enhancement of our neurosurgical services, we are confident that Sabah's healthcare standards will continue to rise, ultimately improving the overall health and well-being of our local population," he added.

Sabah had previously conducted several awake brain surgeries. In Jan 2023, a 50-year-old patient underwent the procedure for a headache, and six months later, a 40-year-old patient with a brain tumour from Sandakan received treatment.

Last month, KPJ Sabah Specialist Hospital became the first private **hospital** in the state to **successfully** perform an awake craniotomy.