



Dr Ahmad (front row, seventh left), Dr Ismail (front row, eight left) and Dr Mohd Yusof (front row, ninth right) together with UMS students after the closing ceremony of the health talk

## Vaccines, immunisations permissible under Islam

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By MOHD IZHAM BIN HASHIM

KOTA KINABALU: Vaccines and immunisations are permissible under Islam and compulsory to protect the community against serious or life-threatening diseases, say medical and religious experts at a forum entitled “Shariah Perspective on Healthcare” here on Saturday.

“Unfounded claims that vaccines are derived from haram (forbidden) substances by certain quarters are based on false information and lack of understanding on the processes of making vaccines, as well as the Islamic perspective on vaccines and immunisation,” said Dr Zainal Arifin Mustapha, dean of the University Malaysia Sabah (UMS) Medical and Health Science faculty.

Meanwhile, Dr Ismail Ali, Deputy Health director (public health) of the Sabah Health Department warned such doubts and misconceptions could cause more people to stop going to clinics to get vaccines and immunisation for their children as required by the Ministry of Health (MOH).

Dr Zainal stressed that vaccines and immunisation play a crucial role in protecting health against disease at every stage of life, from infancy, the preschool years, right into adulthood.

The text of his speech was presented by the faculty’s deputy dean Prof Dr Ahmad Faris Abdullah.

In his officiating address at the closing ceremony of the health talk, Dr Ismail underlined that the worrying trend is affecting vaccination and immunisation programmes carried out by the MOH to prevent Hepatitis B, Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), Rubella and whooping cough.

“However, accurate information on the benefits of vaccination and immunisation will go a long way in educating the people and correcting misconceptions and fear-mongering on vaccines,” he said, noting such health talks and

awareness campaigns should be encouraged to promote immunisation to prevent vaccine-preventable diseases.

Over 100 UMS students attended the health-talk which featured guest speakers, including deputy state mufti Ustaz Hamdani Bin Omar and Public Health specialist Dr Johari Awang Besar who presented their papers on the dangers of smoking according to healthcare and Islam.

Touching on smoking which had been deemed haram by the Sabah Fatwa Council, Dr Ismail lamented there are still Muslims who are still smoking and vaping electronic cigarettes which are endangering their own health and others around them.

Underlining the harmful effects of smoking and vape devices, Dr Zainal pointed out that cigarettes are packed with a toxic cocktail of 700 different hazardous chemicals which poses a significant public health threat, and increases risk of life-threatening health complications such as cancers, lung disease, stroke and heart attacks.

Moreover, he said the habits of smokers not only endanger themselves but also others by exposing non-smokers to second hand smoke which is against the teachings of Islam.

“Every person deserves the right to enjoy fresh clean air and free from the harmful habits of smokers who forces non-smokers, including children and his own loved ones, to inhale their cigarette smoke,” he said.

“This health talk has very defined and focused subject on the dangers on the smoking epidemic and dispelling misconceptions on vaccines and immunisation, which are important aspects needed for the development of healthcare for present and future generations,” said Dr Ismail.

Among others, forum panellists also consist of Department of Community Foundation head Datuk Dr Mohd Yusof Haji Ibrahim and Ustaz Md Razali bin Saibin, officer of Islamic Affairs from the UMS Islamic Centre.