

# 42.9pc Sabahans have mental health issues

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**KOTA KINABALU:** The National Health and Morbidity Survey shows 29.2 per cent of Malaysians face mental health issues and the number is even higher in Sabah which is a whopping 42.9pc, said State Health and People's Wellbeing Minister Datuk Frankie Poon Ming Fung.

He said looking closely on mental health issues, depression is the leading cause of global disease burden among mental, neurological and substance-use disorders.

"Suicide has become the second leading cause of death among youths today, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO) 2018 and Balasegaram 2019.

"Fortunately, most mental health issues are preventable," he said when closing the 2nd Borneo Quality Of Life Conference held at the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, University Malaysia Sabah (UMS), here, Friday.

The conference drew participants from different academic fields such as health, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), political parties and others interested in improving the quality of life in the State.

Among the quality of life issues discussed were poverty, inaccessibility to healthcare, inequality of education, employment, power, income, pollution on agriculture and industrial, infrastructure and marginalisation of some groups.

Meanwhile, Poon said there are several factors determining the quality of life for a population, including but not limited to health, material living condition, education, basic rights and physical safety.

He said with the Industrial Revolution 4.0, digitalisation of different aspects of life has enriched and improved the comfort of our material living conditions.

Nevertheless, Poon said, another important factor is health which determines the quality of life at both individual and population level.



**Poon (centre) receiving a souvenir from Helen, as Jannie looks on.**

"Health consists of both physical and mental health, and there is no health without mental health," he said.

Poon added that poverty is the biggest enemy to health in developing countries.

"By tackling poverty, population health can be improved further and the quality of life of population enhanced. I hope everyone will have easy access to free healthcare services, including mental health, in every corner of the State, and let us work together to bring the quality of life of Sabah to a higher level," he said.

State Law and Native Affairs Assistant Minister Jannie Lasimbang, Organising Chairperson Professor Dr Helen Benedict Lasimbang and UMS Faculty Medicine and Health Sciences Dean Professor Dr Mohammad Saffree Jeffree were also present.