

Zero Malaria in 2020: UMS joins the battle



Dr Jenarun from Disease Control Division, Ministry of Health (seated left); and Prof Dr Mohammad Saffree, Dean of Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences; together with other members of the faculty in a group photo.

UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH (UMS) through Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences are actively engaging with stakeholders for collaboration in research on Malaria.

Recently, Dr Jenarun Jelip from the Disease Control Division of Ministry of Health, Putrajaya, joined a meeting where he shared about the current situation of malaria in Malaysia with the faculty.

According to Dr. Jenarun, malaria – a disease caused by plasmodium parasites which spread through mosquitoes infected with the parasite – is one of the major public-health problems, with over 40 per cent of the world's population are at risk for malaria infection.

"According to Ministry of Health Malaysia, the incidence rate in the country has declined to less than 1 per 1,000 populations since 1998 and it is together observed with the reduction in the mortality figures, while the mortality rate has been around 0.001 per 1,000 populations since 2006," said Dr Jenarun Jelip.

He added that the current threat is the zoonotic malaria, with rising numbers.

"Infections with this parasite can be fatal in the absence of prompt recognition of the disease.

Besides that, resistance of parasites to anti-malarial agents has led to increasing dif-

iculties for the provision of adequate disease management," he added.

Various topics from research gaps in malaria, future collaboration, ideas on attachment programmes and many more were discussed during the meeting chaired by the Dean of Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences Professor Dr Mohammad Saffree Bin Jeffree.

Meanwhile, Professor Dr Mohammad Saffree said UMS through Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences is committed to bring impactful research in public health to benefit the stakeholders including the local community.

"The university also wants to ensure that our students, especially from Masters in Public Health and Doctor of Public Health, are engaged in translational research that they could apply to the needs of the state and country.

"The plan now is for Malaysia to have an elimination status for malaria by the year 2020 and currently we are on a good track to achieve it," said Professor Dr Mohammad Saffree.

Also present during the meeting were the faculty's Head of Community and Family Medicine Department, Datuk Dr Mohd Yusof Ibrahim; Director of Borneo Medical and Health Research Centre, Professor Dr Kamruddin Ahmed; along with other members of the faculty.

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