

Teach Health Science in school again

ON Aug 6, deputy director-general of the Health Ministry Datuk Dr Christopher Lee announced in the keynote address at a health conference that "emphasis is to be on maintaining health and preventing disease, not just on treatment (of disease)."

In the 60s and early 70s, there was a subject called Health Science in the secondary school curriculum. The topics included the structure and mechanism of the human body, common diseases like malaria and tuberculosis of the lungs and the cause and prevention of these diseases. (If one knows the cause, prevention would be so much easier.) The subject was taught up to Form 5.

Then someone in the higher echelons of the then government announced that Malaysia was an "advanced/developed" nation where malaria, tuberculosis and other diseases were no longer rampant and that learning about them in schools would give foreign investors a wrong impression of the country. Health Science was dropped from the secondary school curriculum after that.

A similar scenario is depicted in the renaming of Universiti Pertanian Malaysia to Universiti Putra Malaysia. The reasoning was that foreign investors bringing high-end industrial technology would think twice about investing here because Malaysia was involved in agriculture and not ready for industrial technology.

I propose that Health Science be reintroduced with the relevant topics in the Malaysian educational curriculum, with the involvement of both the health and education ministries. I hope there will not be any objections from parents and guardians to this proposal.

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