

Malaysia's fatality rate lower than global figures

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PETALING JAYA: The country's Covid-19 fatality rates are much lower compared to other countries globally despite recording higher deaths lately, say health experts.

As of Saturday, Malaysia's case fatality rate (CFR) was 0.9%, said Universiti Malaya Department of Social and Preventive Medicine Faculty of Medicine Prof Dr Moy Foong Ming.

"By comparing total Covid-19 deaths and CFR in selected countries and global trends, Malaysia's statistics are on the low side," she said.

CFR is the ratio between total confirmed deaths and total confirmed cases.

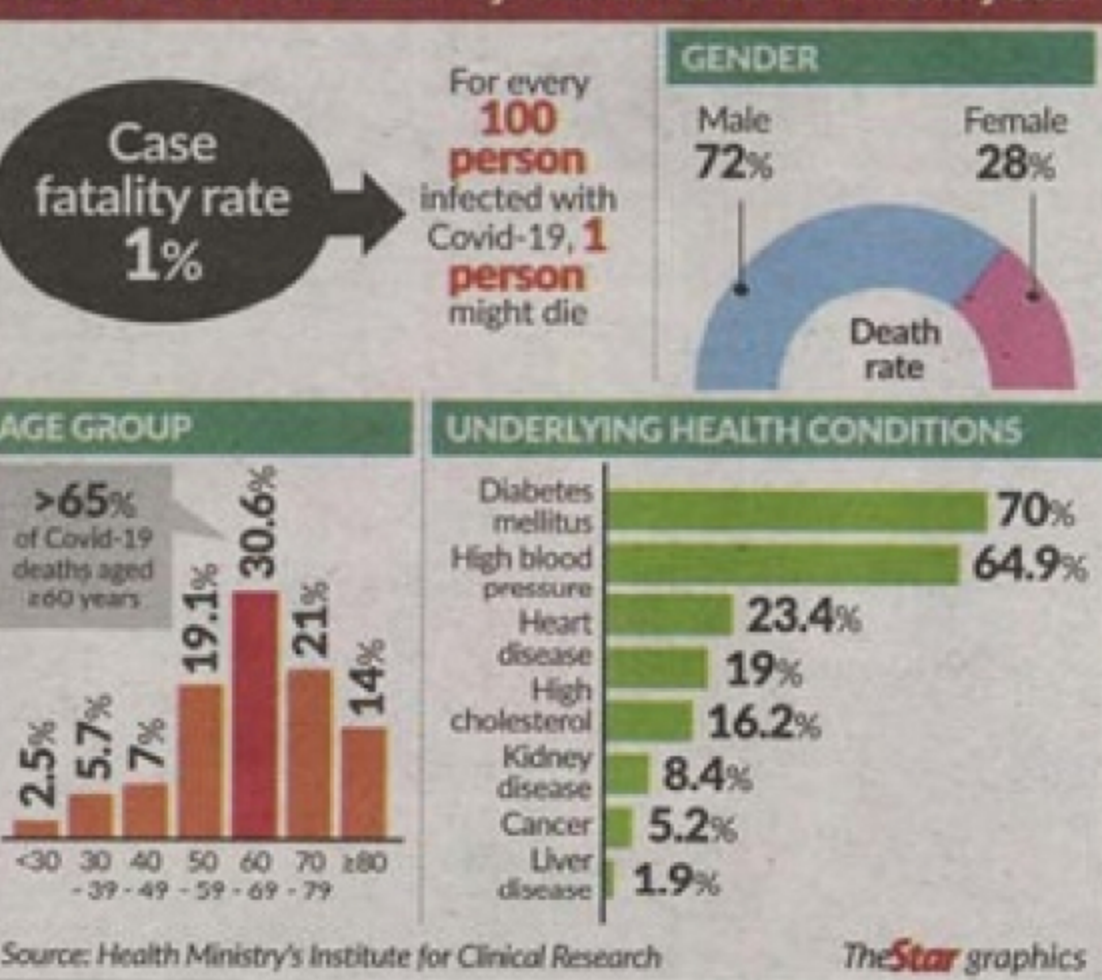
According to the Our World in Data Covid-19 dataset in Asean region, Singapore recorded the lowest CFR with less than 0.1% while Thailand, the Philippines, Brunei, Vietnam and Indonesia recorded 1.6%, 1.9%, 2%, 2.4%, 3.1% and 3.5%, respectively, as of Saturday.

Outside Asean, the United States recorded a CFR of 2.7% while the United Kingdom (6.3%), South Korea (1.8%) and Japan (1.8%).

The statistics by the Health Ministry's Institute for Clinical Research on Oct 13 noted that the country's CFR was at 1% which meant that for every 100 person infected with the virus, one person might die.

Universiti Malaya epidemiologist

Covid-19 mortality statistics in Malaysia



Prof Datuk Dr Awang Bulgiba Awang Mahmud agreed that deaths seemed to be occurring more frequently but rates were actually falling.

"Malaysia's case fatality rate was around 1.4% in June and it's now 0.9%. This fall is actually due to the much larger increase in the number of cases, for example, the denominator has increased faster than the numerator. So, the rising number of

deaths is keeping with the rising number of cases and is to be expected," he said.

But he said the CFR was a rather simplistic way of calculating the death rate, adding that it was also difficult to make direct comparisons with other countries' death rates as they defined Covid-19 deaths differently, and the varying testing rates make it "not really comparable".

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Dr Awang Bulgiba Awang Mahmud

"Worldwide, the trend does show that more older persons are dying of Covid-19 but we need to look at each country's demographics before making any sweeping conclusion.

"Our death rate is much lower than many countries - the US, UK, Italy, France and Sweden - which have much more developed health systems than us," he said.

In terms of the death rates per million population, Universiti Putra Malaysia medical epidemiologist and biostatistician Assoc Prof Dr Malina Osman said Malaysia's death rate was lower compared to the global rates.

She said Malaysia only recorded six deaths per million population compared to Indonesia at 45 and the

Philippines at 60. Singapore had five deaths per million population.

Since the beginning of the third wave of infections, the country has seen 44 deaths just in October compared to the last three months.

Malaysia recorded a total of 187 deaths as of yesterday.

The Health Ministry's statistics showed that more than 65% of the deaths were those aged above 60; the highest deaths were recorded among those in their 60s at 30.6%.

Those in their 50s recorded 19.1% of the deaths, while people in their 70s recorded 21%. Those aged above 80 recorded 14%.

But those who were less than 30, between 30 and 39, and those between 40 and 49 reported lower death rates at 2.5%, 5.7% and 7%, respectively.

The statistics also revealed that the fatality involved mostly men (72%).

More than 80% of the victims have at least one underlying medical condition.

The data showed that 70% of those who had died had diabetes followed by high blood pressure (64.9%), heart disease (23.4%), high cholesterol (19%), kidney disease (16.2%), lung disease (8.4%), cancer (5.2%) and liver disease (1.9%).

Dr Moy noted that obesity was an important risk factor that had been reported in other countries, but not reported in our country's data probably because BMI is not routinely collected.