

Those aged 55 and above urged to undergo health screening annually

KUALA LUMPUR: Some 8,000 Malaysians are diagnosed with end-stage kidney disease annually that requires them to undergo Stage 5 dialysis treatment.

Nephrologist Dr Lily Mushafar said between 65 and 70 per cent of chronic kidney disease patients were diabetics.

She said this was followed by hypertension, kidney stone, chronic glomerulonephritis (inflammation of the tiny filters in the kidneys) and systemic lupus erythematosus sufferers.

"That is why we encourage people who are 55 years old and above, as well as those with a family history of kidney disease and kidney stone, to undergo health screening at least once a year.

"Kidney disease is a silent killer since it will not display any warning sign (or symptom) until at a later stage.

"That is why we encourage all to undergo health screening to enable us to detect the disease early and provide the

necessary treatment."

The head and consultant nephrologist at Tuanku Ja'afar Hospital in Seremban was among the three members of the panel at the first "chit-chat" session held in conjunction with the launch of the MyBuahPinggang website yesterday.

Putrajaya Hospital nephrologist Dr Rafidah Abdullah moderated while the other panel members were Dr Nor Fadhlina Zakaria, a nephrologist attached to Universiti Putra Malaysia, and Khairul Shazwali Taib, a patient who underwent a kidney transplant early last year.

Dr Nor Fadhlina dismissed myths that medications prescribed by nephrologists compounded the condition of kidney disease patients.

"Apart from diabetes, hypertension and genetic diseases, other contributing factors to kidney problems include the consumption of painkillers and other medication not prescribed by medical personnel.

"Health and medical experts will not prescribe any medication that has side effects or is detrimental to the health of patients."

Malaysian Society of Nephrology chairman Professor Dr Abd Halim Abdul Ghafor dismissed the myth that taking supplements would improve the health condition of a kidney disease patient.

He said the issue arose from unverified information available on social media and advertisements.

"When a person is diagnosed with kidney disease, the person or his family members will want to help alleviate the problem.

"Compounding the situation is information on social media about studies and testimonies supporting certain supplements. However, reports on those studies (on taking supplements) that had failed were not highlighted."

He advised kidney disease patients and their family members to refer to the doctors before go-

ing taking any supplements.

Dr Abd Halim was among the three panellists of the second "chit-chat" session moderated by Dr Hirman Ismail, a Health Ministry public health expert.

The other panellists were Dr Bryan Leong Chong Men, a nephrologist at Kulim Hospital in Kedah, and MedTweetMy chairman Dr Khairul Hafidz

Alkhair.

Dr Leong said the MyBuahPinggang website was a good effort to counter misleading information on the disease and its treatments.

"Before this, there was no website that offered verified information related to kidney disease. I hope that this website will help educate the public," he said.