

# MAKE JOB MANDATORY, SAY EXPERTS

'Why should others suffer due to the inconsiderate few who refuse vaccination?'

NURADZIMMAH DAIM AND DAWN CHAN  
KUALA LUMPUR  
news@nst.com.my

**M**ANDATORY Covid-19 vaccination will allow the authorities to draw up a policy to restrict non-vaccinated individuals in work settings, which in turn, helps keep infections in check.

In suggesting this, health experts said such a move should be considered due to violations of the Movement Control Order (MCO) 3.0 standard operating procedures (SOP) by some em-

ployers, and a blatant disregard for public interest and the government's efforts in managing the pandemic.

Former Malaysian Medical Association president Datuk Dr N.K.S. Tharmaseelan said those who refused to get vaccinated should not be allowed into factories or places where there were gatherings like places of worship.

"This is where clusters originate and spread. This is for the greater benefit of the nation. People who refuse to be vaccinated should not be allowed to come to work and pose a risk to others.

"Why should others suffer due to the inconsiderate few who refuse vaccination?" he said, adding that the health and welfare of the nation were more important than the individuals who posed a threat to them.



Datuk Dr N.K.S. Tharmaseelan

This was in addition to the ongoing steps to ramp up the vaccination drive and strict adherence to the SOP, he said.

Dr Tharmaseelan, who is the Melaka-Manipal Medical College professor of obstetrics and gynaecology, said a general sense of complacency had set in among the people, with continuous emphasis needed to remind them of the virus spreading via human contact.

He said measures, such as physical distancing, wearing face masks and washing hands, if observed strictly, should bring the curve of infection down.

"But everyone is restless, the people for being cooped up while politicians are playing to the gallery, trying to please everyone

by opening up and loosening the strict enforcement of MCO procedures. In the end, no one is pleased as more are dying and getting infected.

"A strict lockdown needs to be enforced, including extending the MCO for a reasonably long lockdown to break the chain of infection and clusters," he said.

Epidemiology and biostatistics expert Associate Professor Dr Malina Osman from Universiti Putra Malaysia, while agreeing to the suggestion, said a detailed study was needed before it could be implemented.

"If the public receive the vaccines for free and no charges are imposed on industries, then I would agree with the possible step. But if the companies need to pay, inevitably, the employees would need to pay too.

"This will be the main challenge if we wish to make this vaccination compulsory. If all re-

ceive vaccines for free, then there will be no issue about barring those who are unvaccinated from going to work," she said.

On the current Covid-19 situation, apart from expediting the vaccination drive, she suggested the closure of all factories in red zones until at least 50 per cent of employees had been vaccinated.

Factories in green zones and states logging one or two digits of new cases could be allowed to operate as usual.

Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Khairy Jamaluddin had previously said the government might review the voluntary Covid-19 vaccination policy if the inoculation rate was still low next month.

The Covid-19 National Immunisation Plan coordinating minister recently said 10 per cent of the population were expected to be fully vaccinated by the middle of next month.



A policeman checking compliance with standard operating procedures by workers at a factory in Butterworth on Wednesday.  
PIC BY DANIAL SAAD