

'Vaccines work against Delta'

DG: Inoculations have reduced hospital admissions, ICU bed usage

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PETALING JAYA: The Covid-19 vaccines used in Malaysia have been proven to be effective against the Delta variant, says Health director-general Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah.

He said this was based on the fact that vaccinations in Labuan and Sarawak had managed to reduce hospital admissions, ICU bed usage and use of ventilators for Covid-19 patients.

He expressed confidence that cases in the Klang Valley would also drop once 50% of its population had been vaccinated by Aug 31.

"We are already seeing some positive results, whereby in the Klang Valley when we started vaccination for the elderly, the age group of 60 and above, patients in Sungai Buloh Hospital decreased and now we are seeing age groups of 40 to 59 and 20 to 39 also decreasing in the last one week," he said during a question-and-answer session at the Malaysia Healthcare Conference 2021 held virtually yesterday.



Shot in the arm: Terengganu residents receiving their Covid-19 jabs through a vaccination outreach programme in Kuala Berang. — Bernama

He also noted that findings from the genome sequencing done on 67 samples from July 17 until August showed that 66 samples were confirmed to be the Delta variant.

He said the Delta variant had a higher infectivity rate or R-value than the original virus which

sparked the pandemic last year.

"The R-value for the virus last year started from 2.5, which means one person can infect 2.5 other people but now this variant (Delta) was reported at five to eight, which means if 100 people get infected, they infect 500 to 800 people in one

cycle. They are similar to chicken pox (11 to 12) and measles (18)," he added.

He also said more variants are expected to emerge, adding that mutations happen when the virus replicates.

Universiti Putra Malaysia medical epidemiologist Assoc Prof Dr Malina Osman said it is expected that the number of severe Covid-19 cases will decline as more people get vaccinated.

"Most scientific papers which study vaccine efficacy presented the data by analysing its main impact on the number of hospitalisations, as well as impact on severe complications or ICU capacity," she said.

Universiti Malaya public health medicine specialist Prof Dr Victor Hoe said the vaccine may not be 100% effective against transmission of infection, but those who contract the virus will get milder symptoms.

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