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MUKA SURAT : 20
RUANGAN : NATION

No increase in checks on doctors, says ministry

PETALING JAYA: The Health Ministry's pharmaceutical services division has maintained that its enforcement on doctors is nothing out of the usual.

Division senior director Dr Salmah Bahri denied accusations that the ministry was increasing such enforcement.

"We are meeting with associations representing general practitioners to clarify matters very soon," she said.

Yesterday, a private general practitioner took to Facebook to vent his frustration, alleging that pharmacy division officers raided his office just to find fault with his practice.

The doctor, who runs a clinic in Kuala Lumpur, also uploaded pictures and video clips of the alleged incident.

A senior doctor, who declined to be named, said GPs were questioning why the action seems to be focused on doctors and not on pharmacists as well.

"A lot of pharmacists are also guilty of changing medicines prescribed by doctors," he claimed.

A senior doctor, who wrote to *The Star* under the pseudonym "The Patriots", said that such heavy-handedness by the enforcement unit has been a long-standing problem.

Relating an incident, he said a doctor's reputation had been tarnished after he was asked to plead guilty to a "minor issue" (An inspection of his clinic by the enforcement unit reportedly found one drug that wasn't recorded).

When charged, the doctor, who wasn't represented because he was assured that it was a small matter, pleaded guilty and was fined RM5,000.

The officer who persuaded him to enter the plea then gave the details to the press.

He said the enforcement unit should make an appointment before conducting an inspection, unless it is a raid.

"Stop wasting doctors' time during peak patient hours," he said, adding that the unit's right to call for GPs to be arrested should be aborted.