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COVID-19 IMMUNISATION

# 'NO PROOF VACCINE LINKED TO DEATHS'

For every one million vaccinated, only 11 people suffer adverse effects, says expert

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**E**XPERTS have allayed any fear of fatalities arising from being vaccinated against Covid-19, saying there has yet to be evidence linking deaths to the vaccines' side effects.

Associate Professor Dr Malina Osman, an epidemiologist and biostatistician from Universiti Putra Malaysia, said scientific studies have attributed all post-vaccination deaths to other causes so far.

"Documented reports on adverse effects related to Covid-19

vaccine put the figure at 0.001 per cent, which means for every one million vaccinated, only 11 individuals are affected.

"In another report, it was found that the number of participants who reported at least one serious adverse event was 0.6 per cent in the vaccine group and 0.5 per cent in the placebo group.

"According to the latest data by the National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agency, side effects stemming from Covid-19 vaccination have been managed successfully," she told the *New Straits Times*.

Last month, the Norwegian Medicines Agency reported that 23 individuals died in the country six days after receiving the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, Comirnaty.

However, the World Health Or-



Health workers making preparations at the National Cancer Institute in Putrajaya yesterday to accept frontliners who will receive the Covid-19 vaccine. BERNAMA PIC

ganisation's Global Advisory Committee on Vaccine Safety subcommittee concluded that the vaccine had no contributory role in the fatalities after examining available information and data related to the cluster of deaths.

As such, Dr Malina stressed that vaccine hesitancy had no scientific rationale.

"Without the vaccine, Covid-19 has killed more than 2.47 million people. And yet, with almost 200 million individuals inoculated globally so far, there has been no reported evidence that post-vaccination deaths occurred due to the vaccines," she said.

Dr Malina also lauded Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Khairy Jamaluddin's announcement that a special protection scheme which includes ex-gratia payment would be introduced for vaccine recipients who experience adverse effects post-vaccination.

"It is a wise move which will boost motivation and confidence among the public to get themselves inoculated.

"Besides monetary assistance, the scheme should also provide other benefits like coverage on temporary loss of income due to hospitalisation and clinical follow-up costs, if necessary," she said.

Khairy had made the announcement on Sunday.

"The cabinet agreed, during a special meeting last week, to pro-

vide a special protection scheme, which will be announced at a later date.

"This scheme is for protection and to give an ex-gratia payment to anyone with serious side effects linked directly to the vaccination," Khairy said after the arrival of the first batch of Pfizer-BioNTech's Covid-19 vaccines.

He also said the government would stick to the policy of two doses per person, with an interval of 21 days between injections, as recommended by Pfizer.

The vaccines arrived at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport, transported via MAS Flight MH604 operated by MABkargo Sdn Bhd on Sunday morning.

A total of 312,390 vaccine doses were flown on a passenger-to-cargo flight using an Airbus 330-300 aircraft.



Dr Malina Osman

## Frontliners eager to get vaccinated to better assist the public

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia's frontliners have expressed readiness to be vaccinated against Covid-19.

They stressed that contrary to what some people feared, the likelihood of side effects from the Covid-19 vaccine is minuscule at best.

The National Immunisation Programme, which begins tomorrow, will see the nation's frontliners become the first group to be inoculated against the virus.

Dr Nakhieeran Nallasamy said the vaccine is the best shot Malaysia has to restore normalcy, which the pandemic has upended for over a year now.

"For me, there are three reasons why everyone should take the vaccine.

"First, people should take the vaccine to protect themselves and their loved ones.

"Second, vaccines can help us to return to normalcy, especially since Movement Control Order



(Left to right) Dr Nakhieeran Nallasamy, Nor Asriah Pandir and Dr Bareth Ravindran.

restrictions are detrimental to the economy in the long term.

"Third, we need to get everyone vaccinated in order to introduce herd immunity in our population to stem the tide of infections.

"In this regard, it is important that every individual receives both vaccine doses to ensure that the immunity acquired is long-lasting."

Dr Nakhieeran also stressed

that the possibility of the vaccines generating severe side effects is very rare.

"Studies found that only five in one million who receive the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines will develop anaphylaxis.

"Meanwhile, for the AstraZeneca vaccine, only one individual among 10,000 recipients will develop anaphylaxis, but the rate is expected to decrease as

more people get inoculated.

"In fact, all reports on deaths related to vaccination were proven fake, except for a case in Norway which involved elderly people with serious comorbidities."

His views were echoed by medical laboratory technologist Nor Asriah Pandir, who was eager to get herself inoculated.

"It is important that we take preventive measures before assisting anyone else. Although the vaccine will build our defence system against Covid-19, vaccine recipients must not get complacent and stop adhering to the standard operating procedures.

"Vaccines are only preventive measures. They are not a decisive cure," she said.

Dr Bareth Ravindran said frontliners had a moral obligation to lead by example by getting themselves vaccinated.

"As a healthcare worker, I have seen how the pandemic crippled our healthcare system. Many

healthcare workers contracted the virus while handling infected patients. Getting the vaccine means protecting myself and people around me from infection.

"Everyone must get themselves inoculated as the virus is already rampant in the community. This will reduce Covid-19 infections and free up our resources to tackle other non-Covid-19 health conditions."

Police sergeant Major Kam Phon Klop said he will take the vaccine because it will enable him to assist the public without having to fear being infected.

"All frontliners are exposed to the risk of contracting the virus. So we must get inoculated to protect ourselves.

"Hopefully, the Health Ministry will administer the appropriate vaccines based on our health background, since there are frontliners with other health issues such as diabetes and hypertension."