

M'sians No 3 globally in kidney disease

KUALA LUMPUR: Nine out of every 100 Malaysians suffer from Chronic Kidney Disease.

According to Dr. Thiruventhiran Thilaganathan (pic), Vice Chairman of National Kidney Foundation (NKF) Malaysia, 35,000 patients were on regular dialysis treatment for CKD by the end of 2016.

The graver concern is the fact that this number rises by an average of 15pc every year, putting Malaysia in third place of the world's highest kidney related diseases – and the numbers are not showing any signs of reduction.

The actual number may actually be higher. This is due to the fact that a person suffering from Kidney Disease goes through five stages of the disease and the signs of the disease only manifest itself in the latter stages.

"This is why kidney disease is often referred to as a silent killer. By the time a patient is diagnosed, they are more often than not already in the latter stages of the disease," says Dr. Thiru.

"By this time, treatment options are limited. The best way to help someone with CKD currently is by putting them on regular dialysis treatment. The other option is doing a kidney transplant, but that too brings with it its own set of issues, not the least being the limited amount of donor kidneys available compared to the sheer number of kidney pa-



tients. So for most kidney patients, dialysis is the only available option."

However, Dr. Thiru explains that due to the increase in the number of patients with CKD, there is a need for more dialysis facilities as well as qualified personnel to conduct dialysis treatment for patients. To address this need, NKF began the Post Basic Haemodialysis (PBHD) Nursing Programme in its training centre in 2005 to create more qualified nurses to work with dialysis units and patients.

"This programme began as an internal programme in NKF as an in-house training programme to train internal nurses as we were expanding and opening more centres. These trained nurses would then be stationed at these various centres run by NKF to conduct professional dialysis treatment," said Dr. Thiru.

"However, around 2009, with the boom of dialysis centres being set up around the country, we were getting requests from the Ministry of Health as well as various private organisations and companies to train qualified and professional nurses for dialysis. It was then that the decision was made to take the PBHD programme external," he explains.

Last year, NKF received full accreditation for the PBHD programme by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) as well as full recognition by the Malaysian government. The six-month long PBHD programme is open to nurses who have completed their three-year basic nursing programme and two years working experience as a staff nurse, out of which three months have to be in a

dialysis unit.

Student nurses will get to receive practical training as well as receive attachments in various government hospitals and dialysis centres in the Klang Valley to gain hands-on real world experience. Towards the end of the programme, student nurses will be given an exam which is conducted by in-house tutors and external examiners, following which they will be issued a certificate if successful.

NKF has invested to provide a wide range of facilities for the students of the PBHD Nursing Programme, so that they will get the most out of their learning experience. These facilities that support teaching-learning activities include a computer lab, a mock ward and skill lab, online nursing journals, additional renal-focused books for the library and an additional lecture hall fully equipped with audio visual equipment. NKF Training Centre has also completed a curriculum review which incorporates Core Sciences such as Basic Medical Sciences, Behavioural Sciences and Nursing Sciences.

This year, NKF hopes to conduct two intakes for the PBHD programme, taking in about 20 nurses per intake. However, Dr. Thiru explains that plans are already underway to increase both the number of intakes per year, as well as the number of nurses per intake.

Those who wish to find out more about NKF's programmes including the PBHD programme can contact the NKF by calling 03-79602301/02 or by visiting NKF's website at <http://nkf.org.my>.