

Peddalling from Kangar to Putrajaya to spread obesity message

OBESITY remains the number one preventable risk factor for chronic kidney disease because obesity largely mediates diabetes and hypertension, the two most common causes of end-stage kidney disease.

Overweight and obese people are also more prone to develop some types of kidney disease with rapid progression to renal failure, apart from blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, arthritis and other serious health problems.

In conjunction with World Kidney Day Celebration (WKD17), a group of 31 cyclists pedalled 633km from Kangar to Putrajaya over six days with 16 pit stops.

The aim was to spread the main health message of "Obesity is not OK" and collect signatures on a banner to raise awareness of the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles, exercising to combat obesity and ultimately reducing kidney diseases.

The Kangar-Putrajaya Cyclethon (*Jalajah Kayuhan Kangar-Putrajaya*) was a success as the participating cyclists spoke

to more than 1,000 people and collected signatures as a show of support and commitment to the cause.

The week-long event was jointly organised by the Malaysian Society of Nephrology, National Kidney Foundation, My Sihat and the Health Ministry, and supported by private sector companies.

The many activities held in conjunction with the cyclethon came to a close at Putrajaya's Botanic Garden, which saw more than 1,000 visitors joining in the fun, exciting and informative activities held during the celebration.

The banner with signatures was officially handed over to Deputy Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Hilmi Yahaya at the event.

Organising chairman, Dr Lily Mushahar, senior consultant nephrologist at Hospital Tuanku Jaafar and council member of the Malaysian Society of Nephrology, said the event succeeded in spreading awareness on kidney diseases, making more Malaysians aware of this killer disease.

"The Kangar-Putrajaya cyclethon and WKD17 celebrations are part of a global awareness campaign that aims to spread knowledge on the importance of keeping your kidneys healthy.

"With the 1,000 signatures, the 31 cyclists have achieved their target of spreading an important message on healthy kidneys, making more people aware of the cause while showing them a fun and practical way of combating obesity.

"They have literally cycled the talk," said Dr Lily.

Findings by World Health Organisation (WHO) revealed that about 600 million of the world population were overweight and about 41 million of children under the age of five were either overweight or obese.

"We are hoping to see more positive changes in eating habits and the daily lifestyle of Malaysians," added Dr Lily.

"Statistically, Malaysia is the most obese country in Asia, and the officials blame it on the high calorie diet and sedentary urban



(From left) National Kidney Foundation CEO Chua Hong Wee, Lucenxia (M) Sdn Bhd business development manager Tony Chan, Serdang Hospital head and senior consultant nephrologist Prof Dr Goh Bak Leong, Health Ministry Medical Development Division director Dato Dr Azman Abu Bakar, Dr Hilmi, Dr Lily and Health Ministry secretary-general Tan Sri Mohd Nasir Mohd Ashraf at the close of the cyclethon.

lifestyle.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam said recently that obese Malaysians make up

17.7% while the ones who are overweight make up about 30%, bringing the percentage to 47.7% in total.