

Vaccination: Give CKD patients priority, govt urged

KUALA LUMPUR: The government has been urged to give priority to patients with Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) in its Covid-19 vaccination programme.

The call was jointly made by National Kidney Foundation chairman Datuk Dr Zaki Morad, Malaysian Society of Nephrology president Prof Dr Abdul Halim Abdul Gafor and Malaysian Society of Transplantation president Dr Rosnawati Yahya

They said this would reduce overcrowding in the Ministry of Health's haemodialysis (HD) centres and help return some normalcy to HD centres run by private and non-governmental organisations.

They said priority should be given to groups such as patients on haemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis, patients with functioning kidney transplants and patients with CKD stage 3-4 (pre-dialysis).

The trio said they were concerned on the impact of Covid-19 infection in patients with CKD, especially those with CKD stage 5 who are receiving treatment with dialysis or kidney transplantation.

"Experience worldwide has shown this group of patients are very vulnerable to serious complications of Covid-19 infection and there is significant mortality amongst those infected.

"Similarly, there is an increased risk of healthcare workers (HCW) attending to these patients acquiring this infection due to frequent encounters," they said.

They said there are now about 50,000 patients living on dialysis or have a functioning kidney transplant in the country, with the vast majority of them on haemodialysis.

The huge financial impact on a patient and his family, the staff and the HD centre's management once a COVID-19 infection happens is also a concern.

"There are tests for the virus to be done, PPEs to be donned, and the affected centre has to be sanitised," the statement said. -

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