



Press Statement

“A Call to Accelerate the Elimination of Cervical Cancer”

17th November 2020 - In August 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO), of which Malaysia is a member of, has adopted the global strategy to accelerate the elimination of cervical cancer as a public health problem at the World Health Assembly.¹

Cervical cancer, caused by the infection of human papillomavirus (HPV), is the third most common cancer amongst women in Malaysia and the second most common cancer in women aged 15 to 44 years old. It is preventable with screening and curable with early detection and management. However, it remains a serious issue where an estimated number of 1682 women are diagnosed with the disease and 944 die from it each year in Malaysia.²

Today, WHO launches the Global Strategy to Accelerate the Elimination of Cervical Cancer. Malaysian Medics International (MMI) affirms our stand to work with other national stakeholders to see that these global commitments are taken forward and implemented in Malaysia.

The new strategy outlines the three key pillars of the elimination of cervical cancer - HPV vaccination, cervical screening, and treatment. It emphasises the need for the integrated implementation of services within communities, ensuring equity in access and financial protection for all women. Achieving the target by 2030 would see a reduction of median cervical cancer incidence rate by 10% and by 2120, 70 million cases could be averted.¹

MMI applauds the Ministry of Health, Malaysia in its commitment combating the disease with the introduction of the school-based HPV immunisation programme in 2010 which has been able to vaccinate over 80% of 13-year-old in the country for no cost.³ The government is also working towards utilising self-collection HPV test as a screening tool, a more sensitive and patient-friendly test, which has seen great response since its pilot phase commencement in 2019.⁴ We would like to see that these efforts continue in order to achieve the 2030 target.

MMI will play a role in building knowledge around the disease, key preventions, and early detection services which will save lives as we move forward. It is pertinent that women in Malaysia are well-informed of the disease to empower our community to prioritise their health and wellbeing.

The global movement is driven by the energy and passion of communities, partners, and individuals working towards realising this ambition. The launch of the acceleration of the implementation of the strategy sends a strong signal of worldwide interest in progressing on this important public health issue, despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hence, we call on all stakeholders to join us in building a partnership and continue this momentum to see that children born today will live to see a world free of cervical cancer.

Thank you.

MALAYSIAN MEDICS INTERNATIONAL

TERM 2020/2021

About Malaysian Medics International (MMI)

MMI is an international medical student-led organisation that aims to connect, educate, and cultivate. Since our inception in 2013, we have grown into a global network of more than 200 leaders from seven countries around the world. Presently, we are an active advocate for inclusivity and diversity, reform in medical education, and the welfare of our junior doctors and medical students.

Website: malaysianmedics.org

Email: admin@malaysianmedics.org

References:

1. World Health Organization [Internet]. Geneva CH: World Health Organization; 2020 Aug 19. World Health Assembly adopts global strategy to accelerate cervical cancer elimination; 2020 Aug 19 [cited 2020 Nov 16]; [about 5 screens]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/news/item/19-08-2020-world-health-assembly-adopts-global-strategy-to-accelerate-cervical-cancer-elimination#:~:text=The%20World%20Health%20Assembly%20has,detected%20early%20and%20managed%20effectively>
2. ICO/IARC Information Centre on HPV and Cancer. Human Papillomavirus and Related Cancers, Fact Sheet 2018. Barcelona: ICO/IARC Information Centre on HPV and Cancer; 2018. 2 p.
3. Muhamad NA, Buang SN, Jaafar S, Jais R, Tan PS, Mustapha N, Aris T, Sulaiman LH, Murad S. Achieving high uptake of human papillomavirus vaccination in Malaysia through school-based vaccination programme. BMC public health. 2018 Dec 1;18(1):1402.
4. Codeblue [Internet]. Kuala Lumpur MY: CodeBlue; 2020 Aug 10. Deputy Health Minister Shows Parliament How To Use Easy HPV Self-Tests; 2020 Aug 10 [cited 2020 Nov 16]; [about 5 screens]. Available from: <https://codeblue.galencentre.org/2020/08/10/deputy-health-minister-shows-parliament-how-to-use-easy-hpv-self-tests/>