



EMPOWERED
THE CANCER ADVOCACY SOCIETY OF MALAYSIA

*Demi generasi kami,
berhentilah merokok*

A female visitor poses for a picture during the carnival. — Picture by Hafiz Sohaimi

Smoking main cause of lung cancer in Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR — Stress and an unhealthy lifestyle are among the main factors that contribute to the increase in the number of lung cancer patients annually.

Health Ministry disease control division director Dr Chong Chee Kheong said the main reason however, was due to smoking.

"Each year, there is a slight increase of lung cancer cases. Most smokers smoke due to stress and lack fibre," he said when met at the launch of the Empowered-The Cancer Advocacy Society of Malaysia "Lung Cancer Awareness Carnival and Smoke Free Week" yesterday.

It had been reported there were more than 4,000 deaths in Malaysia due to lung cancer in 2012 involving smokers and passive smokers.

"There were about six million deaths recorded worldwide because of smoking. 10 per cent of them are passive smokers, also known as second-hand smokers.

By **Yasmin Ramlan**
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Most are not aware of the high tendency of getting lung cancer even though they are non-smokers," he said.

In Malaysia, at least one family member smokes and Dr Chong expected the number to balloon in 2030 because of the general unhealthy lifestyle of Malaysians.

Empowered president and founder, Dr Christina Ng, said the campaign was to raise awareness on the disease and to get Malaysians to quit smoking.

Themed "Say NO to Smoke, YES to Life", the campaign aims to get Malaysians to be smoke-free for a week this month.

"We want to encourage the public to say no to smoking. We want them to quit smoking for a week starting today. Our objective is to disseminate vital informa-

tion on the prevention of lung cancer and its symptoms, especially for early detection," she said.

Smokers present admitted it was difficult to quit the habit.

Civil servant Zulkefly Shaari, 50, said he had always wanted to quit smoking but found it very difficult due to the influence of his friends.

"My intention to quit smoking is always there. I plan to quit because of health concerns. I tried four times and the longest lasted only four months," said Zulkefly, who picked up smoking at 30.

Administrative assistant Junaidi Abu Bakar, 29, said he started smoking when he was 13 and was now trying to kick the habit by reducing the number of cigarettes he lights up.

"I used to smoke two to three packs a day but the price of cigarettes is not cheap these days. I need to quit smoking," he said.

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