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Bernamea Feature

NEW DEVICE FOR SAFE PASSAGE TO MANHOOD

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KUALA LUMPUR: Circumcision had long been argued as a way of preventing cancer to the male organ and the cervix (neck of the uterus) of the sexual partner and probably to prevent venereal diseases.

However, there is no solid evidence to support the arguments.

In the old days, circumcisions were performed by barbers using tools of their trade without much regard for aseptic procedures.

That has changed. Circumcisions are now conducted in operating theatres of hospitals and clinics.

The common denominator in these surgeries is the way the foreskin is snipped away or "invasive surgery". The open wound, in the absence of the usual aseptic procedures, creates risks of pathogenic contamination.

For a 10-year-old, Arief is nervous, thinking of the day when he has to undergo the ritual of circumcision. Tales of pain and blood clouds his mind as he takes the steps leading to his acceptance to manhood in an Islamic society.

But today, Arief can look forward to the passage to manhood without much to fear as technological advances enable him to undergo it with a new surgical device known as Tara KLamp Circumcision Disposable device.

The device utilises the concept of tissue rejection that promises no blood, stitches or bandages and reduces a 30-minute procedure to five minutes, enabling someone who has been circumcised to put back his trousers immediately and carry on with life.

The non-invasive techniques or nature of the device is aimed at removing the factors of risk and vulnerability to infection during circumcision.

The disposable device which had been tested successfully locally and abroad is made available to those desiring circumcision irregardless of age.

The "clamp and cut" method of the device will not only make the circumcision safer and easier but it also takes away the pain of it as well. The end product is a neat and even cut result.

The pre-sterilized disposable device which comes in different sizes, is meant for single use only and thereby minimising the risk of HIV infection.

The inventor of this device is Dr T. Gurcharan Singh, now chairman of Taramedic Corporation Sdn Bhd. He took 20 years of intensive research, partly aided by a Malaysian Government research grant of RM163,000 to find a safer alternative method for circumcision.

Referring to the label of the device, he says it alludes to the fact that the device is the first known non-invasive circumcision technique introduced by a Malaysian.

More exciting to him now is business prospects; enquiries from abroad meant that it would make its way across the Malaysian borders after being introduced into the local medical circles about a year ago.

Soon to be manufactured at Taman Teknologi in Kuala Lumpur, the device is made at affordable prices. Plans are in the pipeline to set up a centre at Taman Teknologi to train paramedics and doctors on the usage of the device.

Dr Gurcharan Singh gives the assurance that the device is simple, that even "Tok Mudim" can use it with ease, with minimal training.

Looking back, he says it started in 1973 at his private clinic in Kuala Kangsar when he treated many cases of penile inflammation and infection

resulting of circumcision badly performed elsewhere.

"They had come to me to get 'fixed', these young boys with infections of the most grotesque and appalling nature," he recalls.

He believes problems like infections and bleeding continue to occur because in all the circumcision methods invented so far, the surgery is of invasive type.

Horrified by the frequency of the blotched cases, he felt that there had to be a simple solution and set out to look for it. He wrapped his clinic in Kuala Kangsar in 1983 and then moved to Kuala Lumpur to embark on his research and years later, nature gracefully provided the answer and the solution lay in non-invasive methodology.

He says the device was first unveiled to the Malaysian public at the MINDEX/INNOTEX '95, and it won him a bronze for his innovative approach to a practical procedure.

Being cited as the final frontier in circumcision technique, Dr Gurcharan Singh recalls Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad congratulating him and encouraging him to "Go For It."

He won two gold medals at the International Exhibition of Inventions 1996 in Geneva and World Exhibition of Invention and Innovation in Morocco.

The device has been granted a patent by the Patent Cooperation Treaty, the European Patent office, Munich, Germany and other countries under the Paris Convention.

It has also been approved by Pusat Islam and the Health Ministry and now it is poised to penerate every corner of the world where circumcision is dictated by religion, culture or health reasons.

And, maybe, circumcision henceforth will no longer be viewed with anxiety, pain or fear of death from bleeding, fear of cross-infection, mutilation or excessive removal of the foreskin.

It has the potential to end a social cycle -- there is no longer the need to confine circumcision to the "musim bersunat" or "circumcision season" during the school holidays.

Those interested may contact Taramedic Corporation Sdn Bhd at 03-9321590 or 2553892 for more information. -- Bernama