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Zaharah-Specialists

OPEN SYSTEM TO PRODUCE MORE ENT SPECIALISTS

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 2 (Bernama) -- The open training system implemented by Universiti Malaya (UM) and University Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) earlier this year is expected to produce more Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) specialists or otorhinolaryngologists and help overcome their shortage in the country.

Deputy Health Minister Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman said today the open system which offered looser pre-requisites for doctors to enrol for training as ENT specialist had encouraged more doctors to undertake the specialty.

In the past, general practitioners often shy away from enrolling for that specialisation as universities laid out very strict requirements for enrolment, she told reporters after opening the Seventh Asean Otorhinolaryngologists - Head and Neck Congress here.

The five-day congress, organised by the Malaysian Society of Otorhinolaryngologists and UKM Medical Faculty, is being attended by about 300 head and neck surgeons from Asean countries, Hong Kong, Australia and the United States.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is the patron of the congress.

Siti Zaharah said the ministry had given full support to the open system by installing more equipments for ENT training in all state hospitals and some district hospitals.

With the equipments, the open system ensured localised training which meant that doctors did not have to be relocated to undergo training as normally practised in the past, she said.

She said there were currently 90 ENT specialists in the country, including 21 government doctors and six expatriates.

Malaysia needs 300 ENT specialists to achieve the ideal ratio of one specialist per 150,000 people.

Head of Otorhinolaryngology Department, UKM Medical Faculty, Prof Madya Dr Abdullah Sani Mohamed said that the open system had attracted about 11 enrolment as ENT specialists this year compared to five last year before the open system was implemented.

He said with Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) adopting the same system next year, more doctors would have the chance to be trained as ENT specialists. -- BERNAMA

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