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TECHNOLOGY-PRODUCT  
SILVERFIL BREAKTHROUGH IN DENTAL TREATMENT

KUALA LUMPUR, April 12 (Bernama) -- Silverfil, an amalgam or "mixture" with no free mercury for use in tooth filling, is expected to tap 50 percent of the dental amalgam market in Malaysia within its first year of being commercially sold.

Managing director of Perwira Dunia Sdn Bhd, Dr S Radhakrishnan (the local dentist who invented Silverfil) said the Malaysian market for amalgam, both in alloy and capsule form, was valued at RM7 million per year.

He was speaking to reporters after the launching of the product by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the Malaysian Technology Park at Bukit Jalil here today.

Silverfil, the product of a 17-years research effort, is an amalgam or paste mixture composed of pure silver particles and partially amalgamated silver-mercury powder.

In the face of concern over the risk of free mercury poisoning caused by the use of conventional dental amalgam, Dr Radhakrishnan said the presence of excess silver in Silverfil would "mop up" any free mercury present in a filling.

Perwira Dunia, he added, will focus on manufacturing and marketing Silverfil as the new alternative material for the current silver-tin and copper amalgams used globally.

"But my main interest is to concentrate on the local market first, by promoting this new product to the government. We have been supplying the government with conventional dental amalgam for the past 10 years", he added.

Asked about the pricing factor, he said a typical amalgam will cost RM1.80 per capsule while Silverfil should be priced at RM2.35 but the company had planned to sell the product at RM2.00 per capsule.

He added that Silverfil has already been used on a trial run basis from 1989 till 1996 at a government clinic in Johor, a dental clinic in Ministry of Defence, the Children's Department of the Faculty of Dentistry, University Malaya and by two groups of private dental practitioners.

The process technology had been patented internationally with several patent grants having already been awarded in countries like Malaysia, the United States, Australia, Europe, Hong Kong, South Korea, Russia, Japan and Latin America. -- BERNAMA

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