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Bid to raise awareness on liver diseases

MALAYSIAN Liver Foundation will be holding a charity dinner in honour of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is also the foundation's patron, at the grand ballroom of Sunway Lagoon Resort Hotel in Bandar Sunway, Selangor on July 13.

"The fundraising event also aims to increase the awareness on liver diseases among the public as well as help improve the quality to treatment and research on liver diseases in the country," said foundation president Datuk Dr Mohd Ismail Merican.

He was speaking at a Press conference to announce the dinner held at the Copa Cobana room of Sunway Lagoon Resort Hotel recently.

Also present were foundation chief executive officer Dr Nor Shahidah Khairullah and board of trustees member Datuk Paduka Saleha Mohd Ali.

Dr Mohd Ismail said the organiser hoped to raise RM1 million from the dinner, which would go towards a series of public education programmes on the importance of taking care of the liver.

"Not many Malaysians are aware that liver cancer, one of the top five cancers affecting Malaysian men, is strongly linked to hepatitis B and C," he said.

"Up to 80 per cent of liver cancer patients in the country are not aware that they have the disease and for some of them, it will be too late to undergo definitive treatment."

The funds would also be used to train doctors throughout the country on current diagnostic and therapeutic strategies of hepatobiliary diseases management, including effective preventive measures for common liver diseases in the country, especially hepatitis.

Tables are priced at RM50,000, RM30,000, RM20,000, RM10,000, RM7,000 and RM5,000 each.

While they dine, guests will be entertained by international artiste Johnny Tillotson as well as local artistes like Nora, Ferhad and Sharizan.

For enquiries or table bookings, call Prema or Ong at 03-23003455 or visit www.liver.org.com.

Dr Mohd Ismail also said some 2.5 million Malaysians were suspected to be infected with chronic hepatitis, which is asymptomatic, resulting in those with the disease being unaware of their condition.

Three types of hepatitis have been reported in the country - hepatitis A, B and C. Vaccinations are currently available for hepatitis A and B.

About 25 per cent of these sufferers are at risk of serious infections, complications and even death from liver cancers and cirrhosis.

The Malaysian Liver Foundation, a non-profit organisation, was registered in 1996. It carries out, among others, research in liver diseases, liver registry, hepatitis education campaigns, training of doctors and vaccination programmes as well as organising a liver club and support group.