

**PM: Our medical expertise better than West
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The medical expertise in Malaysia is comparable and sometimes better than in most western countries, said prime minister Najib Abdul Razak today.

He pointed out that earlier this year, the country's healthcare system received the top score out of 25 countries surveyed by an American publication, ahead of Spain, France, Ireland and New Zealand.

"We should all be proud of such recognition and I congratulate members of the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) for the hard work they have put into making Malaysia as one of the best healthcare system in the world.

"That is no small achievement," he said at the launching of the book, 'Malaysian Medical Association Fifty Five Years 1959-2014' in Putrajaya today.

Najib added that excellence was also reflected in the number of foreigners who were coming to Malaysia to have medical procedures.

He noted that Malaysia's share of the medical tourism market had nearly doubled in the last four years.

In 2014, it reached 770,000 patients bringing in revenue of around RM700 million, and this year, the figures were expected to rise further to 930,000 patients and a revenue of RM1 billion, he said.

"(The fact) that people from around the world have such confidence in the quality of our doctors and hospitals is visible proof that Malaysia is on course to achieving our goal of becoming a high income status nation by 2020," he said.

Najib said he also intended to make Malaysia's healthcare system as the priority to enhance competitiveness in the medical tourism market.

"If we are to compare with our neighbouring countries, we have a long way to go and I hope MMA would cooperate with us to help us achieve this challenge," he said.

Through its history, Najib noted the MMA had maintained a close working relationship with the government specially the Health Ministry, sharing responsibility for the health of the nation.

Stressing that the government viewed the challenges faced by the medical field seriously, Najib pointed out that in the 2015 Budget, the government set out to prioritise the well-being of the rakyat and allocated RM23.3 billion for healthcare and facilities.

Also present at the event were Health Minister Dr S Subramaniam, Health director-general Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah, and MMA president Dr Ashok Zachariah Philip.

- Bernama

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