

Malaysia on a trajectory for higher Covid-19 cases - Health DG

Malaysiakini

18 October 2020

COVID-19 | The country's current trajectory suggests more Covid-19 cases ahead, said Health Ministry director-general Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah.

Noor Hisham said this is based on the current R_0 value (pronounced as R naught) of 1.5.

Noor Hisham said the R-value is an indication of how many other people a Covid-19 patient can infect, or in short, the infectivity rate.

"For example, if the R-value is four, it means a person who is positive with Covid-19 can infect four other people during the infectious period.

"This chain of infection will grow exponentially if efforts are not undertaken to break them," he told a press conference in Putrajaya today.

Noor Hisham explained that during the start of this third wave of Covid-19 cases,

the R-value was at 2.2 on Sept 20.

"In the four weeks since then, this value has been reduced to 1.5," he said.

He said while the Health Ministry's efforts are paying off, the R-value must be below one in order to break the chain of infection.

"Therefore, the number of daily cases will continue to rise, although not exponentially," he said.

Noor Hisham said efforts must be redoubled and the movement control order (MCO) tightened in order to break the chain of infection.

"If the chain of infection is broken, it can be brought under control, and the R-value will go below 1.0 and eventually under 0.3," he said.

Noor Hisham urged Malaysians to do their part to "flatten the curve" of Covid-19 cases.

He said the current third wave is more challenging even though the country is now better prepared to deal with it.

In contrast, Noor Hisham said the R-value was at 3.5 during the start of the second wave when the country went into the MCO on March 18.

He said during that wave, the R-value was eventually reduced to 0.3.

The current wave of Covid-19 cases is on a greater magnitude than before.

The peak number of Covid-19 patients during the second wave was on April 5 with 2,595 people undergoing treatment at one time.

Most of them were foreigners confined to detention centres.

In contrast, there are 6,886 Covid-19 patients under treatment as of yesterday, most of whom are Malaysians and many are within the community.

The number of patients undergoing treatment is also hitting a record high on a daily basis since Oct 6.

"Therefore, the Health Ministry appeals to all quarters to play their part.

"While the Health Ministry and other agencies do their duty, the community is urged to show their support by abiding with the set standard operating

procedures.

"Stay at home if you have no business outside," he said.

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