

## **Health DG: Two main Covid-19 variants in China detected in M'sia**

**Malaysiakini**

**02 January 2022**

**Bernama**

Two main Covid-19 variants that are found to be spreading rapidly in China, namely BA.5.2 and BF.7, which accounted for almost 80 percent of the variants found in China currently, have been detected in Malaysia.

Health director-general Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said as of Dec 31, there were 4,148 cases infected with BA.5.2 and three cases infected with BF.7 in the country.

However, Noor Hisham clarified that there is thus far no data to link BA.5.2 and BF.7 variants to increased risk of serious illness or death.

“Both variants are listed as sublineage Omicron BA.5 and have not been linked as lineage under monitoring by the World Health Organization (WHO).

“However, both the BA.5.2 and BF.7 variants are believed to have been caused by recurring cases or those who have a high chance of contracting the variant due to

a high number of cases in China,” he said in a statement today.

According to Noor Hisham, the situation will be monitored from time to time and when there are drastic changes that need strategic measures to ensure public health, it will be announced immediately by the WHO to all countries and for public attention.

The BF.7 Variant which is an abbreviation for BA.5.2.1.7, originated from the Omicron BA.5 variant and for the first time was diagnosed in the world in July 2022.

Meanwhile, Noor Hisham said genomic surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 in Malaysia throughout December 2022 showed that the XBB variant was dominant in the spread of Covid-19 in the country.

The XBB variant comprises 55.4 percent of the samples; followed by the BA.2.75 variant (20.8 percent) and BQ.1 variant (10.8 percent).

“This shows that the XBB variant is the main variant that is spreading among Malaysians since October 2022. Both the XBB and BA.2.75 variants are a type of variant lineage under monitoring WHO,” he said.

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Source: <https://www.malysiakini.com/news/650120>