

One-stop cancer centre

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National Cancer Institute to also train oncologists

PUTRAJAYA: The National Cancer Institute here will not only offer the latest form of treatment for cancer patients but will also train oncologists and carry out research on the killer disease.

The treatment will also incorporate traditional and complementary medicine using herbs in collaboration with a teaching hospital under China's Beijing University.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek said the training of oncologists had not been very successful so far, and there were only a few new oncologists last year joining the existing 37 nationwide.

Stating that the ideal patient-ôncologist ratio was 1:250,000 as stipulated by the World Health Organisation, he said, the current ratio stood at 1:750,000.

The ministry, he added, would be using the services of foreign clinical oncologists until there were enough local specialists.

"The Prime Minister has agreed with the plan to engage foreign clinical oncologists for the institute until we have enough of our own," he said, adding that at least 10 oncologists had to be trained every year to meet the ideal ratio.

Speaking to reporters after the ground-breaking ceremony for the institute here by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi yesterday, Dr Chua said there was no particular reason that doctors did not want to be oncologists, adding that it was a matter of interest.



HEALTHY START: Abdullah and Chua planting Tongkat Ali (a traditional herb) trees yesterday at the ground-breaking ceremony of the National Cancer Institute being built in Precinct 7 in Putrajaya.

"Each year, there are at least 40,000 new cancer patients in the country and about 80% of them are detected rather late," he said.

Dr Chua said the RM340mil institute located on a 5.8ha site in front of the Putrajaya Hospital here was being built under a private finance

initiative scheme.

Among the facilities available will be radiotherapy and oncology, nuclear treatment, surgical oncology, palliative care and daily comprehensive treatment with 252 beds for in-patients.

Dr Chua said under the project,

the Putrajaya Hospital will have new equipment such as the Cyclotron and PET-CT.

"The institute will also have a cancer management centre offering programmes for smokers and alcoholics to stop their habit, as well as campaigns on healthy living.