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Leave dispensing ^{The Sun} drugs to doctors: Dr M _{-12/3/2015}

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SERDANG: Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad is of the opinion that doctors should prescribe and dispense medicines instead of patients having to go to pharmacies.

"It would be easier if the doctors can give the necessary medications on the spot without patients needing to wait further," he said at the signing ceremony of the collaboration agreement between Perdana University and the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) here yesterday.

Mahathir is the chancellor of Perdana University.

"When I was a doctor, I took my medicine bag with me and gave whatever medicines needed immediately. The patient wouldn't need to wait," he said.

Although he admitted that having pharmacists dispense medications may lower incidences of giving out wrong medications or dosage, he said errors can occur even with pharmacists.

Patients would need to obtain medication from pharmacies if the Health Ministry accepts the proposed "doctors diagnose, pharmacists dispense" system.

While the system may cause some inconvenience to patients, pharmacists say it will

help bring down the prices of medicine and give doctors access to many more drugs to prescribe.

While nothing has been finalised, the Health Ministry has said its priority is to ensure quality and safety.

Mahathir said healthcare in Malaysia has come a long way from his childhood days, when a medicine man or a bomoh was often sought to cure ailments.

"I (have) had my chest opened up and 'messed around'. My heart was stopped, my lung was stopped, I was technically dead! But I survived! That's how much medicine has progressed. Back then, if a person's chest was opened up, he would be dead!"

He said stem cell research is progressing and one day, damaged organs can be replaced entirely by artificial ones.

The agreement between Perdana University and UCSD is expected to bring tremendous opportunities to both institutions and would drive Perdana University towards its goal of achieving international distinction as well as recognition as an elite and successful academic institution.

The 10-year joint collaboration will focus on enhancing and implementing a forward-thinking medical curriculum, a model for comprehensive patient care and a platform for innovative research.