

Work together to cut costs

PM calls for more inter-Asean medical research collaborations

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KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has called on Clinical Research Malaysia (CRM) and other local medical research institutions to enhance collaboration with counterparts across Asean to help lower the cost of medicines, accelerate medical discoveries and develop treatments tailored to the region's needs.

He said CRM should also work closely with local universities, particularly medical faculties, to ensure research efforts are impactful and serve the needs of the people.

"One of our key challenges is to prevent healthcare costs from escalating.

"The medical industry can become burdensome, as we've seen major companies earning excessive profits without considering the burden on consumers," he said at the official opening of the CRM Trial Connect Conference 2025 here yesterday.

He said increased collaboration in clinical research, both locally and within Asean, would be key to Malaysia's continued technological and socio-economic development.

Anwar said the need for greater cooperation between institutions and nations is vital amid the chaotic global situation caused by US President Donald Trump's planned reciprocal tariff hike.

He added that by fostering clinical research collaborations with Asean neighbours, Malaysia can become a hub for developing clinical breakthroughs that address the healthcare needs of people in the region.

Anwar said this would also help keep healthcare solutions costs affordable while generating more



Proud moment: Anwar presenting the 'Media of the Year' award to Ng at the CRM Trial Connect Conference 2025 in Bangsar South. Looking on are (from left) Health Ministry secretary-general Datuk Seri Suriani Ahmad, Zulkefly, Sarawak Deputy Premier Datuk Dr Siim Kui Hian and CRM CEO Dr Akhmal Yusof. - AZHAR MAHFOF/The Star

clinical expertise jobs in the country.

"It's not just about the numbers but also about people, talent and knowledge. Every clinical trial conducted will produce ripple effects in many areas, including medical, logistics and data management.

"This will equip our youth with the skills to thrive in a global marketplace and offer our professionals a platform to collaborate with the best minds in the world.

"This will also ensure that innovation doesn't just benefit the few but uplifts many," Anwar said.

He added that only by working across borders and sectors can Asia's full potential in forming a sustainable and competitive regional ecosystem for clinical research be realised.

Anwar also highlighted how

clinical research in Malaysia has become a key pillar of its healthcare and socio-economic landscape.

He revealed that since 2012, the nation's clinical research ecosystem has contributed over RM1.5bil to its Gross National Income (GNI) and created over 3,000 highly skilled jobs.

Anwar, together with Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad, then presented the CRM Sponsored Research Awards 2025 to various individuals and companies for their invaluable work in advancing clinical research in Malaysia.

The Media of the Year category was won by Star Media Group (SMG) for increasing public awareness of clinical trials through several articles it had published in 2024. The award was

accepted by SMG chief content officer Datin Paduka Esther Ng.

Other winners included Investigator of the Year Award winner Dr Voon Pei Jye from Sarawak General Hospital (SGH) for having recorded the highest number of new sponsored research in 2024 and significant accomplishments in early phase research. SGH also won the Top Study Site (MOH) Award.

CRM's Top Study Site (Overall) Award went to Universiti Malaya Medical Centre for having the highest number of new sponsored studies in 2024.