

Beware new variant that avoids detection even in screening, warns DG

FREE MALAYSIA TODAY

May 18, 2021

FMT Reporters

KUALA LUMPUR: Health director-general Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah has expressed concern over the emergence of new variants of concern (VOC) where patients do not show any symptoms and their Covid-19 screening tests, in fact, often came back negative.

Nevertheless, some patients were already in critical condition, he said.

In a statement today, Noor Hisham said those VOC spread rapidly and were also linked to high fatality rates.

Elaborating, he said most individuals infected with these variants did not show symptoms such as cough or fever but they experienced joint pain, tiredness and loss of appetite.

“Some patients also don’t show Covid-19 common symptoms such as loss of smell or taste. However, these new variants spread quickly to the lungs.

“A large number of patients also don’t have a fever although there are signs of pneumonia detected through X-ray scan,” he said.

So far, three VOC have been detected in the country, namely the South African variant (B.1.351), the UK variant (B.117) and the Indian variant (B.1.617.1).

Therefore, Noor Hisham urged the public to always remain vigilant and practice distancing and isolation to avoid being infected by the virus.

He stressed that the current Covid-19 wave was more serious than the previous ones.

“We must not be careless and must always be cautious. Stay at home if you don’t have important matters outside. We have to practise self-movement control order,” he said.

He also reminded the public to avoid crowded and confined places, always observe physical distancing, wear face masks and wash their hands regularly with soap or sanitiser.

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