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Enhance MySejahtera To Study Long Covid — Ahmad Mahfuz Gazali

By CodeBlue | 20 December 2021 (https://codeblue.galencentre.org/2021/12/20/enhance-mysejahtera-to-study-long-covid-ahmad-mahfuz-g

The burden of Covid-19 is not only limited to the number of cases, deaths, and hospitalisations, but also long Covid patients.

My uncle and I were travelling together for a few days at the end of November this year.

Several days after parting ways with him, I developed flu-like symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat, and others that seemed to indicate Covid-19 infection.

The symptoms seemed to worsen, so I decided to go to a clinic to perform a Covid-19 test.

After the RTK test returned a positive result, I went into quarantine, while waiting for the PCR test result.

After my diagnosis was confirmed with the PCR test, I immediately reported as a positive case in MySejahtera.

As a result, I was given a 10-day notice of home surveillance order by the Ministry of Health (MOH) via MySeja

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In addition, I also disclosed my close contacts for the last two weeks using MySejahtera.

During the quarantine, I was required to perform updates using home assessment tools twice a day, whereby health status was monitored remotely via self-reporting in MySejahtera.

My health status was continuously monitored for 14 days after reporting my initial diagnosis.

This is an example of how technology and self-reporting can reduce the burden on health care workers during Covid-19 pandemic.

The MOH should be commended for these efforts, despite the many criticisms directed towards MySejahtera especially with regard to technical issues.

Furthermore, the MOH's disease control division senior assistant director, Dr Arunah Chandran, said that MOH also looking into expanding MySejahtera to track non-communicable diseases (NCD) (https://codeblue.galencentre.org/2021/10/21/moh-mulls-tracking-cancer-chronic-diseases-with-mysejahtera/)

Before MOH looks into tracking NCDs in the population, it should seriously consider using MySejahtera to study the health status of former Covid-19 patients, especially those who suffer from long Covid.

Health minister Khairy Jamaluddin said that a rehabilitation programme to treat patients who suffer from long Covid is being planned, and will be executed in several hospitals.

Furthermore, he stated that long Covid patients commonly suffer from these five symptoms: fatigue, difficulty breathing, cough, difficulty to sleep, and anxiety. (https://www.astroawani.com/berita-malaysia/derita-long-covid-kkm-rangka-program-rehabilitasi-buat-bekas-pesakit-321673)

As a former Covid-19 patient, I do suffer from fatigue, especially when performing activities that require complex concentration and attention at work.

With an estimated 20,000 patients suffering from long Covid (https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/nearly-20000-in-malaysia-suffering-from-long-covid) in Malaysia, International SOS, a leading health and security company, has identified long Covid as a challenge for businesses in Malaysia and worldwide. (https://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/long-covid-challenge-malaysian-employers)

Given the seriousness of long Covid for patients and the economy in general, it is worth expanding studies in long Covid in MySejahtera.

A study was conducted in the UK involving more than 4 thousand cases of former Covid-19 patients using a mobile app called the COVID Symptom Study app. (https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-021-01292-y)

The study reported that one in 20 Covid-19 patients is more likely to suffer from long Covid. It also commonly affects older people, women, and those who experienced five or more symptoms.

Until December 19, 2021, more than 2.6 million individuals have recovered from Covid-19 in Malaysia.

Given the large number of Covid-19 cases in Malaysia, combining the in-patient approach and self-reporting in MySejahtera can accurately identify long Covid patients in Malaysia.

Let us not forget that the burden of Covid-19 is not only limited to the number of cases, deaths, and hospitalisations, but also long Covid patients.

Therefore, MySejahtera should be enhanced to identify long Covid patients and treat them appropriately.

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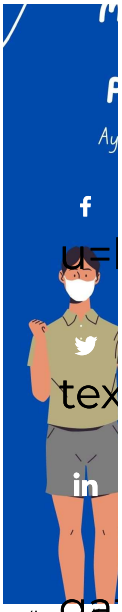

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