

Malaysia destroys expired medicine worth RM2.1mn

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Singapore: As per reports, Malaysian Ministry has disposed of nearly RM2mil (US\$446,678) worth of expired or spoilt drugs and medicines over a two-year period from 2014. The country's Health director-general Datuk Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said that most of the drugs were returned to government pharmacies by patients under the ministry's "Return Your Medicines" (PPU) program.

The PPU programme was introduced in 2010 so that patients can return their unused or excess medicine for safe disposal by the ministry. Dr Noor Hisham said the most common form of medicines which were returned by patients under the PPU program were those used to treat diabetes, hypertension, high-cholesterol and gastritis.

The list included some of the rarely used medicines like anti-venom. "Other medicines had to be disposed as they had been damaged or spoilt due to disasters such as floods," he told The Star.

Dr Hisham explained that among the reasons patients ended up with expired or unused medicines was a change or discontinuation of a treatment. In other cases, patients end up receiving a supply of the same medicine from multiple sources as they might have had follow-up appointments at different facilities.

He added that few people returned medicines on behalf of patients who had died, while others had expired medicine either because they experienced side effects and stopped taking them or because they did not comply with the prescribed regimen.

"Patients are also encouraged to bring their medicines from home every time they come for refill so that we only top-up the supply accordingly instead of giving them extra. It is important for all parties, including patients and healthcare providers, to play their role in ensuring no wastage of medicines," Dr Noor Hisham said.

"Patients are advised to be compliant towards their medication therapy while supports from the healthcare providers are available for patients if they have any issues with their medicines."

Dr Noor Hisham said RM1.8mil (US\$402,000) worth of medicine was disposed of in 2014, equal to 0.075 per cent of the ministry's budget for that year.