

2nd Case of MERS-CoV in Malaysia: Challenges in Public Health Response

Lim Yin Cheng, MPH, Nirmalah Subramaniam, DrPH, Masitah Mohamed, MPH

Klang District Health Office, Klang District Health Office, Klang District Health Office

ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Klang District Health Office received notification of a case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Corona Virus (MERS-CoV) on 30th of December 2017. World Health Organization reported this as the second case of laboratory-confirmed MERS-CoV in Malaysia. The aim of is to highlight challenges that faced by district health office in controlling MERS-CoV outbreak. **CASE REPORT:** A 55-year-old Malay gentleman with history of performing umrah pilgrimage was tested positive for MERS-CoV on 31st December 2017. He was discharged after 11 days of admission. Active case detection was conducted. Of the 70 close contacts identified, 36 (51%) were from the same pilgrimage, 20 (29%) were healthcare professionals, 8 (11%) were other close airline contacts and 6 (9%) were household contacts. Throat swabs were taken on 58 contacts, and all were tested negative for MERS-CoV. All contacts were put on Home Surveillance for 14 days. **DISCUSSION:** Our main challenge is to confine the contacts at home. Some of the contacts still performed their daily activities because food ration was not provided. In addition, the home surveillance cards were not being accepted by some of the employers. We did face challenge in taking samples for throat swabs due to limited slots given by government hospital, lack of isolation rooms and trained staffs. Certain aspects of the MERS-CoV guideline are not well-defined, such as transporting close contacts for sample taking. The existing guideline needs to be revised and updated. Despite the challenges that we faced the outbreak was well-controlled.

KEYWORDS: Coronavirus, Middle east, MERS-CoV, outbreak, pilgrim

A Qualitative Study on Scheduled Substances Abuse Among the Clients of Cure and Care Clinic, Karangan, Kedah.

Ahmad Aizat Zaini, Mohd Hanif Mustafa

Pharmacy Enforcement Branch, Division of Pharmaceutical Services, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia, Pharmacy Enforcement Branch, Division of Pharmaceutical Services, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Products containing scheduled substances such as psychotropic pills, cough medicines and *Mitragyna Speciosa* (ketum) had been frequently abused and often perceived as less threatening compared to the pandemic issue of illicit dangerous drugs use. **OBJECTIVES:** This study aims to qualitatively investigate the issues surrounding the abuse of products containing scheduled substances and the relationship between the abuse of these products and the illicit use of dangerous drugs among the clients in Cure and Care Clinic Karangan, Kedah. **METHODS:** Direct interview sessions were simultaneously held by four interviewers, involving a total of thirty clients at the Cure and Care Clinic Karangan, Kedah. Convenience sampling **METHODS:** was used. Interviewers were given a set of questions as reference points. Interviews were done until the data saturation point was achieved. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and the data was analysed into themes. **RESULTS:** The thematic analysis grouped the data into five themes, namely the factors triggering scheduled substance abuse, accessibility and affordability of the abuse scheduled substances, the types of scheduled substances abused and illicit use of dangerous drugs, dependence or habit-forming effects, and the ramification of substance addiction. Two main products containing scheduled substances; cough preparations and ketum had been identified as the popular choice for abuse among the clients. **DISCUSSION:** The abuse of scheduled substances plays a role in prompting the subsequent illicit use of dangerous drugs among the clients mainly due to the ease of access to the scheduled substances such as ketum and cough preparations in the market.

KEYWORDS: schedules substances abuse, ketum (*Mitragyna Speciosa*), cough medicine, illicit use of dangerous drugs.