

LETHAL PANDEMIC

'RISE IN COVID-19 DEATHS OVER PAST 9 WEEKS'

For every 10,000 people infected, 45 may die, says health minister

DAWN CHAN
KUALA LUMPUR
news@nst.com.my

HEALTH Minister Datuk Seri Dr Adham Baba said up to Saturday, the Covid-19 fatality rate stood at 0.47 per cent with 2,650 deaths.

There were 451 deaths reported with an average of 64 a day, a 35.4 per cent increase compared with the previous week. The increase in deaths had been observed for the past nine weeks, he said.

"This showed that for every 10,000 people infected, 45 may die. Seventy-one per cent of

deaths involved those aged 60 and above.

"They had high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, kidney and heart disease as well as lung complications."

He said since the pandemic began, 82,341 children and teenagers (from infants up to 17), had been infected with Covid-19.

Data from Jan 25 last year to Sunday showed that there were 19,851 cases from the 0 to 4 age group, 8,237 from the 5 to 6 age group, 26,851 from the 7 to 12 age group and 27,402 from the 13 to 17 age group.

"The younger generation is now more prone to contracting the virus compared with last year when the transmission was then more prevalent among those aged 60 and above," he said yesterday.

Dr Adham advised parents to adhere to the standard operating procedure (SOP) to protect their children.



Family members watching frontliners bury the body of their loved one, who died of Covid-19, at the Setali Muslim Cemetery in Kuantan on May 2. PIC BY ARIZUL HAFIZ AWANG

Parents, he added, should refrain from taking their children to crowded places.

"This is important and we have given this advice under the Prevention and Control of Infectious Disease Act 1988 or Act 342.

"We do not have a provision for a compoundable clause under Act 342.

"But with the SOP issued by the National Security Council, which has been gazetted, we can open an investigation paper against parents who defy the order by exposing their children in high-risk areas."

Dr Adham said the ministry would ramp up close contact screenings in states where the positivity rate derived from Covid-19 sampling tests was more than five.

In the epidemiological week 21, from May 23 to Saturday, all states in the country, except Perak, Sabah and Perlis, registered a positivity rate of more than five, with Kelantan having the highest positivity rate at 11.84 per cent.

Dr Adham said the average positivity rate for epidemiological week 21 was 6.89.

The state with the second-highest positivity rate was Negri Sembilan (10.03), followed by the Federal Territory of Labuan (8.78).

Other states and territories with high positivity rates were Putrajaya (8.61), Selangor (7.99), Melaka (7.95), Kedah (7.70), Terengganu (5.80), Sarawak (5.79), Johor (5.79), Kuala Lumpur (5.72), Penang (5.66) and Pahang (5.44).

Perak, Sabah and Perlis registered the lowest positivity rates at 4.78, 3.83 and 3.79, respectively.