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Rules make dental care safe

WE refer to the letter "HIV: Need to clarify matters" (NST, Nov 18).

The Ministry of Health and the Malaysian Dental Council (MDC) would like to reassure the public that stringent adherence to standards of infection control protect both patients and healthcare providers from possible Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection in dental practices.

In this respect, the MDC has published and circulated two documents — Guidelines on Infection Control in Dental Practice (1996, revised 2nd Edition 2007) and Guidelines for Oral Healthcare Practitioners Infected with Blood-bone Viruses (2007) — to all dental practitioners registered with the MDC to ensure adherence to standards of infection control.

All government dental clinics observe strict compliance with the infection control guidelines, in which standard precautions are strictly followed for all blood and body fluids, excretions and secre-

tions, whether or not contaminated with blood.

This ensures safe dental practice to protect the patient, the dental practitioner and other healthcare personnel.

Under the Private Healthcare Facilities and Service Act 1998 (Act 586), Private Healthcare Facilities and Services Regulation 2006 and the Code of Professional Conduct of the MDC (2008), all private sector dental practitioners are also bound to comply with these guidelines.

All private dental clinics have been inspected under the first registration exercise of private dental facilities which began in 2008.

These clinics are also subject to periodic inspection under Act 586 as part of continuing monitoring on health and safety and quality of care.

Evidence has shown that transmission of HIV occurs mainly through blood, semen, vaginal secretion and mother-to-child

transmissions.

The virus is inactivated by heat and disinfectants such as glutaraldehyde, hydrogen peroxide and alcohol.

The ministry has data on reported cases of HIV/AIDS from 1986 which list the major risk factors as injecting drug users, sexual activities, blood transfusions and mother-to-child transmission.

Notification of any HIV/AIDS case is mandatory under the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases Act 1988 (Act 342) to ensure necessary action is undertaken to contain transmission.

I, once again, reassure the public that the possibility of contracting HIV infection through dental treatment is negligible.

Any member of the public with information or queries on the matter is advised to channel them to any of the following addresses:

• Secretary,
Malaysia Dental Council,

c/o Oral Health Division,
Ministry of Health Malaysia,
Level 5, Block E10, Parcel E,
Presint 1, 62590 Putrajaya.
Email: ohd@moh.gov.my

• Cawangan Kawalan Amalan
Perubatan Swasta, Bahagian
Amalan Perubatan,
Kementerian Kesihatan
Malaysia
Level 3, Block E 1, Parcel E,
Presint 1, 62590, Putrajaya.
Tel: 03-88831302/1301
Email: ckaps@moh.gov.my

• Sektor HIV/STI
Bahagian Kawalan Penyakit,
Level 4, Block E10, Parcel E,
Presint 1, 62590 Putrajaya.
Tel: 03-88834387

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