



#HEALTH: Early detection of cervical cancer is vital

By [Meera Murugesan](#) - January 14, 2023 @ 8:00am

CERVICAL cancer is the third most common cancer among Malaysian women, with the percentage of cases detected late increasing each year.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), early intervention plays a pivotal part.

However, participation in screening and preventive programmes continues to be low in Malaysia.

The ROSE Foundation was set up in response to WHO's call to make cervical cancer a rare disease in the country.

It is a non-profit organisation focusing on eliminating cervical cancer through early detection advocacy in the country.

ROSE Foundation founder and trustee Professor Dr Woo Yin Ling, says many women are not screening for cervical cancer regularly, with two-thirds of cases being detected in the late stage.

"Unlike the pap smear tests which are invasive and painful, Malaysian women can now be tested using ROSE's signature and innovative cervical screening strategy called Programme ROSE that offers a simple self-swab, a quick, convenient, and effective approach."

Programme ROSE was created especially for Malaysian women. It integrates self-sampling, primary HPV testing and a digital health platform using mobile technology, ensuring women who require follow-ups are linked to care for treatment, if necessary. To-date, the foundation has successfully screened over 21,000 women throughout Malaysia.

WHO's Cervical Cancer Elimination Strategy targets for 2030 include 90 per cent of girls being fully vaccinated with the HPV vaccine by the age of 15, 70 per cent of women screened with a high-performance test by 35 years of age and again at 45, and 90 per cent of women diagnosed with the disease receiving treatment.

In conjunction with Cervical Cancer Awareness month in January, Subang Jaya Medical Centre (SJMC) collaborated with the ROSE Foundation recently for a free, do-it-yourself (DIY) cervical cancer screening programme.

SJ ECHO, a local community platform aided the initiative by spreading information about it amongst the targeted community.

Throughout the five-day "If Not Now, When? #endcervicalcancer" programme, 300 Human Papillomavirus (HPV) PCR self-sampling swabs were distributed to women in the Subang Jaya community.

Five People's Housing Project (PPR) flats were also part of this outreach programme.

SJMC chief executive officer Bryan Lin says cervical cancer is often known as the "silent killer", which develops slowly without any warning or symptoms.

This programme aims to make a difference in society by ensuring cervical cancer screening is more acceptable and accessible to women, especially those who may not be fully aware of the seriousness of this disease, he explains.



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