



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

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Press Statement

29 July 2021

CAP: Ivermectin is important to complement vaccines

The Consumers Association of Penang (CAP) congratulates the Members of Parliament who took up the issue of Ivermectin, as it is an issue of prime importance.

With the escalating number of daily cases, we call upon the government to permit off-label use of Ivermectin by qualified doctors. We would like to point out that about 3.7 billion doses of Ivermectin has been distributed in mass drug administration campaigns globally for humans for over three decades.

Ivermectin is a broad-spectrum antiviral found to be active in limiting infection by a range of viruses including HIV-1, Dengue viruses, influenza, chikungunya, and recent studies show that it is a potent inhibitor of Covid-19 virus as well. Its use as an antiviral is not new as it had been used for both Ribonucleic (RNA) and Deoxyribonucleic (DNA) viruses.

On the safety profile of Ivermectin as compared to Remdesivir, we can see that Ivermectin is very much safer.

Medicine	Year reporting started	Deaths	Adverse event reports
Ivermectin	1992	20	5,523
Remdesivir	2020	549	6,836

Source: WHO's VigiAccess.org (24 June 2021)

The Journal of Antimicrobial Chemotherapy published a peer-reviewed meta-analysis in April 2020 that remarked on the safety of high doses of ivermectin stating that it “offered the ‘highest level’ of evidence examining safety issues around the drug”.

Already approved by KKM for scabies, and the dose approved for mass distribution in case of outbreak of scabies is the same dose as that normally available and can be used as early COVID treatment.

With the current spike in the daily number of cases nationwide. It went up to 17,045 on 25 July 2021 from 10,710 on 18 July 2021, an increase of 6,335 within a week. Since then, it is still showing an uptrend with no indication of when it is going to relent.

An example of the limited efficacy of vaccines can be gleaned from the case in Israel whereby about half of adults infected in an outbreak of the Delta variant of Covid-19 were actually fully inoculated with the Pfizer vaccine. This prompted the government to reimpose an indoor mask requirement and

other measures to contain the highly transmissible strain. In Malaysia, there were more than 1,800 fully vaccinated healthcare workers infected with Covid-19, albeit exhibiting only mild symptoms.

As it has been seen that vaccines are not completely effective, especially against new variants, Ivermectin can thus be used as a prophylactic complementary to vaccination programme for those who are still waiting for vaccination date, and even those who have been vaccinated as an extra precaution. Its safety and efficacy can be based on the trials and use in other countries because we cannot wait for the conclusion of the clinical trials in September to decide to base on the increasing number of daily cases.

We had not for a moment advocate the stopping of the clinical trial carried out by the Health Ministry. We are only urging the government to allow the use of Ivermectin basing on the successes of other countries that used it until the completion of the clinical trial. We are asking for the off-label use of Ivermectin under the doctor's supervision. We also do not ask for the use of Ivermectin to replace vaccines but to complement them. At the rate of infections, we do not have the luxury of time.

Mohideen Abdul Kader
President
Consumers Association of Penang