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Letter to the Editor

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CAP: Care Delayed Is Care Denied

Access to medicine is a crucial matter which will decide who lives and who dies. Medicines form a very important component of healthcare services. Shortages of medicines will have a huge impact on healthcare outcomes.

There was a report in the mainstream media captioned “Fatal Prescription” on 25 June 2022 where industry players said the shortage of medicine is not only unique to Malaysia as it is a global issue. This statement is hardly an answer to a person who has morbidities and is dependent on medical supplies for his survival. To suggest that reduced medical supplies during the pandemic were a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic cannot go with the patient's needs for drugs and services.

According to the industry players, Malaysia depends heavily on imports from the United States, the United Kingdom, China and Australia. This should not be an excuse as there are other alternative suppliers such as Thailand, India, Bangladesh and Vietnam. National preparedness for emergencies and calamities should have been in place a long time ago. The point is not to assuage vulnerable communities with these sorts of excuses.

Medicine shortages can be eliminated by enforcing an essential list of medicine at the supplier end.

Generic substitution is another solution to meet the demand for medical supply.

Suggesting sharing information is not an answer to someone who is in dire need of medicine as it will not alleviate the suffering.

The role of policymakers is to plan out the problem as the pandemic is not new. Policymakers should be able to work around this situation and at the same time take into consideration of climate change.

The issue of an ageing society should not be an excuse.

Malaysia should relook into carrying out with the Essential Medicine List and the Therapeutic Guideline.

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