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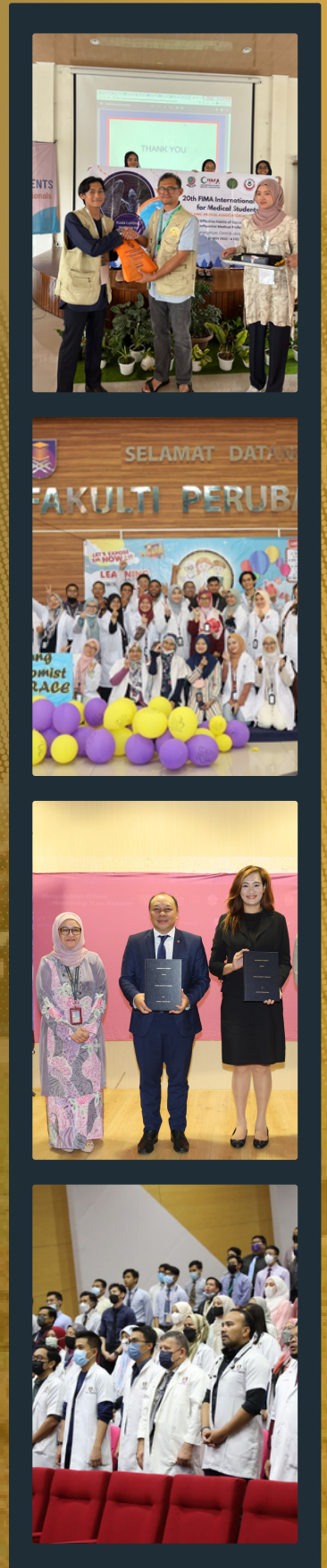
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Journey Through Ramadan – A Diabetes in Ramadan Patient Education Program

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The incidence of Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus (DM) in Malaysia is increasing, with an estimated almost 4 million adults diagnosed, according to the Malaysian National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) 2019. This is primarily contributed by the Malay race, with a prevalence of 59%, followed by the other races, translating into a large population of people with diabetes who will be fasting during the month of Ramadhan in this country. Fasting in Ramadhan for those with diabetes mellitus is challenging and needs close monitoring with sufficient and comprehensive medical advice.

Diabetic complications during fasting are more frequently seen in patients with inadequate disease control or insufficient information. To address this issue, a diabetes patient education program was designed and conducted for patients attending the UiTM endocrine clinic. This program aimed to facilitate knowledge attainment and improve the dissemination of information, mitigate the risk of diabetic complications in Ramadan, pave the way to fasting safely.



Themed 'Journey Through Ramadan', this diabetes in Ramadhan patient education program was held in the diabetes and endocrine clinics at Hospital Al-Sultan Abdullah (HASA) and the UiTM medical center at Sungai Buloh, administered throughout March 2023. Conducted at the clinic waiting area, this program was organized into three parts. Commencing with a self-educating activity, Muslim patients familiarized themselves with handling diabetes during fasting from information on poster boards prepared specifically for the program.

Next, each patient had an individualized consultation with an appointed specialist from the endocrine team, where they had a risk calculation of fasting in Ramadhan and further explanation on managing diabetes during the month. The risk of fasting was calculated based on the International Diabetes Federation – Diabetes in Ramadan (IDF-DAR) practical guideline, where the personalized score was categorized into the high, moderate, and low risk of fasting in Ramadan.

The patients were then advised on the management of their medications, as well as the timing for monitoring their blood sugar during fasting. Additionally, they were also informed regarding the complications and recognizing symptoms of hypoglycemia and the treatment for it, as well as when to break the fast. They subsequently

received guidance on dietary recommendations and judicious physical activity from the diabetic educators.

This whole education process was facilitated by a booklet, which was designed and produced specially for this program. This guide detailed essential knowledge on fasting in Ramadhan for people with diabetes. It was divided into a few categories, comprising of the population at high risk for continuous fasting, adequate timing of blood sugar monitoring, when to break the fast in the event of complication and steps to handle the situation, medication adjustment, dietary advice and tips on keeping active during the fasting month. Further avenues of assistance were provided for the patients to communicate with the diabetic educators during the fasting month if required. After the education program, each patient received a certificate in the form of a fridge magnet as an acknowledgment of their involvement as well as a tool of reminder. The program was concluded mid-Ramadhan, with more than 180 attendees and with positive input from the participants.