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ADVOCACY WORKSHOP TRAINING OF TRAINERS FOR HENTI.ELAK.BASMI.ASAP.TEMBAKAU (HEBAT) PROGRAMME: A UM/UiTM COLLABORATION

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20TH JANUARY 2024 - It was on a Saturday morning, still fresh into the new year that the Quit Smoking and Adolescent teams from the Department of Primary Care Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, UiTM received a friendly collaborative visit from the researchers under the Nicotine Addiction Research and Collaborating Group (NARCC) Faculty of Medicine, University Malaya.

Our academic peers made their way to our doors on a bid, as a joint venture to plant the seeds of tobacco control advocacy into the hearts and minds of our undergraduates and postgraduate students.

It is now evident that despite many prevention and health promotion efforts made to develop awareness about the

hazards of nicotine; smoking and vaping remains stubbornly prevalent, and the age of smokers is getting younger.



So therefore, in line with Malaysia's aim to be a Smoke-free Nation in 2040, serious youth advocacies must commence and be implemented. There is a need to focus on more sustainable efforts to prevent the population especially school students from becoming future smokers or vapers.



The University Malaya Centre for Addiction Sciences (UMCAS) with its NARCC researchers actively conduct research and programs related to tobacco control. The Generational Endgame (GEG) training of trainers (TOT) has begun in University Malaya since 2015 and has successfully trained university students to become tobacco control advocates for their peers and community.



However, this program has now been rebranded to Henti Elak Basmi Asap Tembakau (HEBAT), in keeping with the recent sideline of government policies with regards to the Generational Endgame (GEG). HEBAT carries the same, if not a stronger call to instil early and sound advocacy against nicotine among our youth, to foster the initial aims set out by the GEG.

In UiTM, the Primary Care Medicine department's adolescent team has developed a training module: The Stop Nicotine Addiction among Secondary School Students (SNAASSS©), a smoking prevention intervention based on an informal, educational, and peer-led approach. This module consists of training the health educators, school awareness campaigns and peer-led group counselling among active smokers/vapers.



Therefore, this proved to be a worthy and timely academia collaboration in recognising the importance of equipping our students as smoke free advocates with knowledge and understanding of the dangers of tobacco and vape.

The day rolled out with an interactive ice breaking session, one which was much needed as we had a varied mix of 42 undergraduate medical students, postgraduate as well as, PhD students from both the Medical and Dental Faculties, in UiTM. This ensued onto the training modules, carefully delivered by a host of lecturers from both the academia comprising of primary care physicians, and emergency medicine specialists with interest in tobacco control advocacy.



The training module topics ranged from historical landmarks, tobacco legislation, goals of tobacco endgame, the hazards of nicotine, tips and benefits of quitting vape/cigarette and communication skills for social media engagement in tobacco control advocacy.

The highlight of the day was a group exercise which saw the 5 groups create their original anti-nicotine activity as a tool for future school awareness programs. Creativity flowed amongst the students resulting in catchy dance moves, gripping posters, heartwarming videos and witty reels to garner attention among the young to advocate against nicotine and its harms.

This enlightening day of training and knowledge transfer unravelled raw ingenuity, potential and positive activism toward tobacco control among UiTM students leaving them driven with new seeds of insight and empowerment.

These seeds, we hope will further take its roots and emerge into mature fruits of peer led advocacy against nicotine addiction into schools, institutions of higher learning and the community, at large.

