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UNIVERSITI
TEKNOLOGI
MARA

FACULTY OF MEDICINE UiTM

MED BULL'

NO.3/2024



eISSN 2805-4628



9 7 7 2 8 0 5 4 6 2 0 0 0

Menyerlahkan Potensi
Membentuk Masa Hadapan



WILDERNESS FIRST AID: A LEARNING JOURNEY IN KIULU, SABAH

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Five second-year pre-clinical students recently embarked on an educational adventure to Kiulu, Sabah, as part of their elective project. Their goal? To gain hands-on experience in wilderness first aid. Partnering with Fieldskills Adventures & Training, they explored the wilderness, learning critical skills to handle medical emergencies in remote settings.

Day 1: Building the Basics

The training began with an introduction to basic human anatomy and the scope of first aid. This theoretical session laid the foundation for understanding medical emergencies in daily and wilderness settings.

Students were introduced to the ABCDE approach (Airway, Breathing, Circulation, Disability, Exposure), a systematically assessed and managed emergency management method. This approach proved crucial in teaching how to address accidents when far from immediate medical assistance.

The session then moved into CPR training, covering adults, children, and drowning victims. Special attention was given to how CPR techniques have evolved during the COVID-19 pandemic. Practical demonstrations and hands-on practice ensured students were confident in their ability to perform CPR. Later in the day, the focus shifted to managing bleeding, both minor and major, along with bandaging techniques. This session provided students with essential skills to treat wounds and stabilize injuries.

By the end of Day 1, the students had gained a solid understanding of essential first aid skills, equipping them to respond to real-life emergencies.



Day 2: Practical Learning in the Forest

On the second day, the students ventured deeper into the wilderness. After a 30-minute hike into the forest, the group began applying their skills in real-life scenarios.

The students were given simulated emergencies such as managing snake bites, fractures, bleeding, and concussions. Each student took turns playing both rescuer and victim, ensuring they experienced both perspectives. This practical experience was vital in helping them understand the realities of providing first aid in the wild.

The day ended earlier than expected due to rain, but the coach provided valuable feedback on the student's performance. This constructive review helped the group refine their skills and prepare for future emergencies.

Giving Back: Presentation at a Secondary School

After completing the two-day training, the students were eager to share their knowledge. They organized a presentation at Sekolah Menengah Integrasi Teras Islam (SMITI) Al Hafidz for 43 students from Forms 1 to 5, along with 10 volunteers from Jabatan Amal and Briged Amal NGO.

During the session, the group covered important topics like CPR, managing choking, treating bites and bleeding, and handling anaphylaxis in outdoor environments. They used a hands-on approach, encouraging audience participation. Volunteers from the crowd practiced the techniques, which made the learning process more engaging.

This two-way communication ensured that participants not only learned the procedures but also had the opportunity to apply them in real-time.



Conclusion

The students' experience in Kiulu, Sabah, was more than just an elective—it was a transformative journey. Through their wilderness first aid training, they gained valuable knowledge and practical skills that will serve them throughout their careers. By sharing this knowledge with the community, they also demonstrated a strong commitment to promoting safety and preparedness in challenging environments.

Their journey into the wild wasn't just about learning first aid—it was about readiness, resilience, and stepping up when others need help. As they return to their studies, the lessons they learned in Sabah will continue to shape their approach to healthcare, both in urban and remote settings.