

Safe Medication Disposal Programme (SafeMedD) in collaboration with Alpro Pharmacy

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: SOCIAL INNOVATION RESEARCH GRANT (CE-SIR) 2023:

In Malaysia, the issue of pharmaceutical waste contaminating the water system has become increasingly prevalent, particularly in areas characterised by dense populations, extensive industrial activity, and agricultural practices. Pharmaceutical waste can be defined as drugs that can no longer be used because they are expired, unused, or for any other reason. It should be highlighted that there are currently only a few restrictions imposed on the release or disposal of these pharmaceutical wastes. Despite the presence of these substances in the aquatic system, little is known about how these pharmaceutical pollutants could potentially impact the ecosystem. In fact, scientists from all around the world are still unsure about where to draw the line when it comes to potential environmental risks.

From 1997 to 2013, the Malaysian government's pharmaceutical spending through subsidised programmes surged from RM 8.3 billion to RM 44.7 billion, more than quintupling the amount in just 6 years. Undoubtedly, with the subsidised healthcare programme, Malaysians have access to affordable medications and healthcare services. However, this commendable benefit has imposed a new dilemma: an alarming upsurge in drug usage, which in turn correlates directly with the escalating introduction of pharmaceuticals into the environment, primarily due to improper disposal practices. Therefore, this issue needs to be addressed appropriately and requires cooperation from all parties, including the community. Efforts must be undertaken to mitigate the environmental impact and safeguard the ecological balance that sustains us all.

Hence, the Safe Medication Disposal (SafeMedD) project was initiated in collaboration with Alpro Pharmacy. In line with our mission, Alpro Pharmacy Sdn Bhd has also launched dedicated medication disposal bins at all Alpro outlets nationwide to collect excess medicines to be disposed of ethically without polluting the environment. Through this collaboration, we aimed to provide knowledge and inculcate the correct practice of safe medication disposal among the community through the planned project.

The objectives of this project are:

- To instill awareness in a targeted community about the proper way of handling pharmaceutical waste
- To build networking between UiTM and the community as well as the industry on issues regarding pharmaceutical waste management



On 10th August 2023, marked our first collaborative work with Alpro Pharmacy. Our team, which consisted of 4 lecturers and 11 students, was invited to Alpro Pharmacy headquarters located in Sendayan Negeri Sembilan. The primary objective of this visit was to sample the medications that were returned or disposed of in Alpro Pharmacy's medication disposal bins across Malaysia. The Alpro team kindly provided us with 8 packages, or approximately 30 kg of returned drugs, during this visit. Since this is a continuous project, more sampling will be conducted in the future. All collected data will be published and shared with Alpro Pharmacy for their corporate social responsibility program. This collaboration signifies a significant step forward in our collective commitment to responsible medication disposal and environmental stewardship. The project's focal point will revolve around an awareness campaign scheduled for December 2023, targeting the residents of Bandar Puncak Alam, Selangor. We hope that this campaign will raise awareness of proper medicine disposal among the public and related parties from both government and non-governmental organisations. This campaign marks the preliminary stage of our efforts to protect and guarantee the sustainability of our ecosystem. This is in line with our mantra: "Think locally, act globally!"

TogetherWeSupportSafeMedicationDisposal

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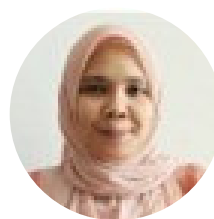
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