

Prospects and Development in the Malaysian Herbal Industry:

An Enlightening Talk by Dr. Vijayan Ellappan

By: Dr. Siti Alwani Ariffin

On July 3, 2024, an enlightening talk titled "Local Herbal Treasure: Prospects and Development in the Malaysian Herbal Industry" was held at DK 9, Faculty of Pharmacy, UiTM Puncak Alam as part of the Traditional and Complementary Medicine (T&CM) Collaborative Teaching. This insightful session, led by Dr. Vijayan Ellappan, a distinguished herbal medicine practitioner, attracted 65 participants, including students and lecturers. This two-hour talk, from 8:30 to 10:30 AM, aimed at providing comprehensive exposure to local herbs, their benefits, potential applications, and the broader industrial uses and developments in the Malaysian herbal sector.

Dr. Vijayan Ellappan, with his extensive knowledge and experience in herbal medicine, provided the attendees with a deep dive into the current trends and prospects of the herbal industry in Malaysia. He began by discussing the increasing popularity of herbal treatments among Malaysians, highlighting their growing demand due to the natural compatibility of these treatments with the human body. This compatibility, he noted, makes herbal remedies a preferred choice for many seeking alternative therapies.

A significant portion of the talk was dedicated to the ongoing research and innovation within the herbal sector. Dr. Vijayan emphasised the collaborative efforts between Malaysian universities and the pharmaceutical industry in developing new herb-based products. These collaborations aim to explore and harness the medicinal properties of local herbs, paving the way for innovative treatments and applications. He provided insights into some of the groundbreaking research projects currently underway, showcasing the potential of local herbs.

The economic and industrial prospects of the herbal sector were also discussed as a focal point of the talk. There is growing interest from local and international markets in Malaysian herbal products, driven by their unique properties and effectiveness. This interest explains, and presents numerous opportunities for students and professionals to engage in the herbal industry, whether through research, entrepreneurship, or clinical

practice. Dr. Vijayan encouraged the attendees to consider these opportunities, highlighting the rewarding and impactful careers that can be built in this burgeoning field practice.

Throughout the talk, Dr. Vijayan shared case studies and examples of successful applications of local herbs in traditional medicine. These examples not only illustrate the practical benefits of herbal treatments but also demonstrate the potential for integration into modern healthcare practices. He also addressed the challenges faced by the herbal industry, such as regulatory hurdles and the need for standardised practices and discussed potential solutions to overcome these obstacles.

The event concluded with a lively Q&A session, where students and lecturers had the opportunity to engage directly with Dr. Vijayan, asking questions and sharing their thoughts on the topics discussed. This interactive segment further enriched the learning experience, allowing participants to gain deeper insights and clarify their understanding of the subject matter.

In summary, the talk by Dr. Vijayan Ellappan was a resounding success, providing valuable knowledge and inspiration to T&CM students and lecturers. It underscored the importance of local herbs in both traditional and modern medicine and highlighted the promising future of the herbal industry in Malaysia. This activity has undoubtedly enriched the participants' understanding and appreciation of the Malaysian herbal sector, encouraging further exploration and involvement in this dynamic and impactful field. The T&CM team of the Faculty of Pharmacy UiTM Puncak Alam remain committed to organising such educational activities, fostering a deeper knowledge of traditional and complementary medicine among students.



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