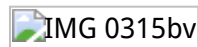


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English News

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## USM CONTINUES TO SUPPORT WHO 'NO TOBACCO' INITIATIVE



USM, PENANG, 31 May 2016 – The World Health Organisation (WHO) has designated 31 May each year as the 'World No Tobacco Day'. The theme which has been decided by WHO this year is 'Get Ready for Plain Packaging'.

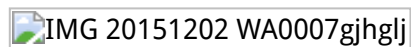
The Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Professor Dato' Dr. Omar Osman reminded the USM community on the dangers of smoking and the need to avoid from being involved in such an unhealthy habit, as it in turn would also affect others.

"Until recently, smoking has caused six million deaths every year and more than 10 percent of the individuals around those who smoke have been affected by the side-effects, the second-hand smoke. Thus, I am urging the staff and students of USM to practice a healthy lifestyle and not to be addicted to smoking and to avoid from using tobacco," said Omar.

The USM National Poison Centre also supports in the use of plain cigarette and tobacco product packaging in accordance with WHO's decision to come up with a more comprehensive tobacco control approach.

The Director, Associate Professor Razak Lajis said that the aim of having the specified day was to create the awareness in the general public, on how the commercialised image portrayed by the tobacco companies needs to be stopped, as it provides a wrong perception and is the opposite of the actual facts on the detrimental effects of smoking on health.

According to Articles 11 and 13 of the WHO Convention Framework on Tobacco Control, it is recommended that all quarters involved in the tobacco industry to adopt plain packaging in order to reduce the number of smokers worldwide.



"Plain packaging that is devoid of names, colours, logos, brand images and promotional details other than the brand name and the product would reduce the appeal as well as in limiting the promotion of the brand," he said when interviewed.

Apart from that, the USM National Poison Centre has cooperated with MySihat USM in the effort to reduce the number of smokers among the general public and more specifically the USM community through various mechanisms, among which is the No Tobacco USM campaign launched in 2013.

“The programme which has been conducted for three years has produced a positive impact when the USM community no longer smoke on campus grounds, and this has provided a strong support for the USM community to continue living their lives in a healthy and clean environment,” he said.

Said Razak further, USM has also received grants from the Ministry of Health Malaysia for the promotion of MySihat programme to ensure the success of a Tobacco-Free USM, as well as in conducting tobacco-free campaigns to benefit the local community.

It is estimated that Malaysia has more than four million hard-core smokers and the number is predicted to increase, with more females and teenagers picking up the habit at about the age of 19.

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