

Medical experts come together to give hope to underserved communities

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(From left) Dr Haritharan, Betong Hospital medical officer Dr Mohamed Faris Alman Mohamed Iqbal, and UPM general surgeon Dr Asraf Haslam Jasmani observe the monitor while performing a laparoscopic cholecystectomy on a recurrent pancreatitis patient.

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KUCHING: A new ray of hope is shining on the underserved regions of Sarawak through a first-of-its-kind public-private partnership, backed by the Ministry of Health Malaysia (MOH), Malaysian Society of Anaesthesiologists (MSA) and Subang Jaya Medical Centre (SJMC).

Through the Global Surgery Initiative (GSI) programme, highly skilled and compassionate doctors, medical officers, and nurses from Sarawak General Hospital (SGH), Sri Aman Hospital 2 and SJMC joined hands to perform an impressive 34 surgeries in a week, thereby improving lives and leaving a lasting impact on the communities they serve, said a press statement.

Malaysian Society of Anaesthesiologists (MSA) president Prof Dr Ina Ismiarti Shariffuddin said the GSI initiative is a noble cause that empowers patients without access to critical medical services.

"We are grateful to be a part of this effort to establish safe

and patient-centred anaesthesia. The dedication and expertise of healthcare professionals involved in this programme are remarkable, a testament to their tireless efforts in improving countless lives.

"This initiative sets an example for us to follow as we work towards bridging critical healthcare gaps and making a difference," she said.

From gallstones to kidney failures, a team of highly skilled healthcare professionals tackled a diverse range of complex cases.

Dr Gunalan Palari Arumugam, chairman of the Medical Advisory Board, SJMC and Consultant Anaesthesiologist and Critical Care Physician, SJMC, worked together with the medical team in performing various surgeries.

"We can be the doers, movers, and shakers of the imperfect healthcare system instead of lamenting its flaws. The success of the project was made possible by the hard work of many individuals, and the hope is that more doctors will come forward to contribute their time and expertise in the future.

"The GSI programme serves as an example of how individuals can take ownership and responsibility for driving positive change and building a better, more equitable healthcare system for all," he said.

The team of medical experts from SJMC who made the GSI programme a success included not only consultant general and hepatobiliary surgeon Dr R Krishnan Raman, consultant general and hepatobiliary surgeon Dr Haritharan Thamutaram, and consultant general and vascular surgeon Dr Liew Ngoh Chin, but also a dedicated team of nurses and other healthcare professionals.

The medical team's expertise and tireless efforts were crucial in bringing GSI to life. Their commitment to improving access to surgical services is inspiring, urging others to support similar initiatives that bring life-saving treatments closer to underserved communities.

Together, every patient can have access to quality healthcare services regardless of their location or financial situation.