

WFH raises cardiovascular disease risk

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WFH raises cardiovascular disease risk

► Staying home results in unhealthy lifestyle such as poor eating habits and lack of exercise due to restrictions on outdoor activities, says expert

KUALA LUMPUR: The work from home (WFH) practice implemented in various sectors during phases of movement control orders has led to an increasing number of people suffering from cardiovascular disease, according to an expert.

University of Malaya Medical Centre consultant specialist in cardiology and internal medicine Assoc Prof Dr Muhammad Dzafir Ismail said among the negative aspects of WFH were that people tend to eat "too much of unhealthy

food" while at home and not exercising enough as they could not do outdoor physical activities such as jogging or cycling due to the restrictions.

Muhammad Dzafir said cardiovascular disease, including coronary artery disease (CAD), has remained Malaysia's leading cause of death every year, Bernama reported.

According to Statistics Department data, 23% of deaths in 2019 were caused by cardiovascular disease. Out of the medically

confirmed deaths due to cardiovascular disease, 16,325 or 15% were due to CAD.

He said CAD is caused by blockage in the heart blood vessels, also known as coronary blood vessels.

"The process of fat deposition or atherosclerosis is the main reason blockage in coronary blood vessels occur, as oxygen supply that is supposed to be carried by the blood cannot reach the heart muscle area. This condition, also called ischemia

or ischemic, will cause the heart to not function properly.

"If left untreated for a prolonged period of time, one could suffer a heart attack and subsequently heart failure, which could eventually lead to death."

He said over a period of time, other risk factors such as diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol levels, inactive lifestyle and hereditary issues could worsen CAD.

Mahkota Medical Centre consultant cardiothoracic surgeon Dr Kenny Cheng said several regular surgery options for CAD are available at local hospitals, the popular one being coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG), that involves creating new conduits to bypass the blockage in

blood vessels.

"The best way to treat blocked arteries is to bypass the blocked portion of the coronary artery with another piece of a healthy blood vessel taken from elsewhere in the patient's body," he said.

However, there is another minimally invasive procedure called endoscopic vein harvesting (EVH), where a 2-3cm incision is made to harvest a leg vein using specialised equipment consisting of an endoscopic camera and dissectors.

CABG patients, who are obese or diabetic and are at elevated risk of surgical wound infections, experience fewer infections with EVH procedures compared with open harvest surgery.