

DOBBS Community and OncoCare strengthen early cancer detection pathways in Malaysia

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GP Onco Navigator Programme connects primary care education, public cancer awareness and specialist referral pathways to help Malaysians take action sooner



DOBBS Community and OncoCare have joined forces to strengthen cancer awareness, early detection and access to appropriate specialist care in Malaysia through the GP Onco Navigator Programme, an oncology-focused initiative designed to bring primary care doctors, patients and cancer specialists closer together.

The collaboration recognises an important reality in cancer care: for many Malaysians, the first conversation about an unusual symptom begins not with an oncologist, but with a family doctor or general practitioner.

By strengthening the ability of primary care doctors to recognise potential cancer warning signs and providing clearer pathways for patients to seek further assessment, DOBBS Community and OncoCare aim to help more Malaysians move from awareness to appropriate medical action earlier.

Empowering General Practitioners as an Important First Line of Detection

General practitioners play an important role in recognising symptoms that may require further investigation.

Through the GP Onco Navigator educational series, doctors were given access to specialist-led discussions addressing practical questions they may encounter in everyday clinical practice, helping them better identify possible red flags, determine when further investigation may be needed and understand when referral to specialist care should be considered.

The initiative is designed not to turn every symptom into a cancer diagnosis, but to support more informed clinical decision-making and reduce unnecessary delays when warning signs warrant further attention.

Dr Alan Teh, Founder, DOBBS Community, said: "For many patients, their GP is the first healthcare professional they speak to when something does not feel right. Strengthening oncology awareness at the primary-care level can therefore make a meaningful difference in how quickly a patient moves from noticing a symptom to receiving the appropriate investigation or specialist referral.

"Through this collaboration with OncoCare, we want to make cancer awareness more practical for doctors and more accessible for the Malaysian public."

Creating a Digital Front Door for Cancer Awareness

Beyond medical education, the programme developed a dedicated digital platform that gives the public an accessible starting point for cancer-related health awareness.

The platform brings together educational information, guided self-assessment and onward navigation covering breast, thyroid, lung and colorectal cancer-related concerns. It is designed to help users better understand symptoms and determine appropriate next steps while making clear that digital assessment is educational and does not replace professional medical diagnosis.

Rather than functioning simply as an information website, the platform creates a pathway from awareness to assessment, education, clinic discovery and specialist navigation when appropriate.

For patients who may be uncertain about whether a symptom deserves medical attention, this provides a lower-friction entry point to becoming more informed about their health and seeking professional advice where necessary.

From Cancer Awareness to Earlier Action

The GP Onco Navigator Programme demonstrates a model in which cancer education is supported by permanent digital infrastructure and an expanding clinical network.

Instead of ending when a webinar concludes, educational content remains available on demand, while the digital platform continues to provide an always-accessible gateway to cancer awareness and navigation.

The campaign report identified three particular strengths of the programme: clinically relevant education for primary care, an always-available digital pathway and the development of practical referral capacity through participating GP clinics.

Together, these components support a broader goal: helping Malaysians recognise potential warning signs sooner and making the journey toward appropriate medical assessment and treatment clearer.

Dr Wong Shin Yee, General Manager, OncoCare, said: "Earlier cancer detection begins with awareness, but awareness must be connected to action. Patients need to know where to go, primary care doctors need confidence in recognising concerning presentations, and there must be a clear pathway toward specialist evaluation when it is needed.

"By working together with DOBBS Community and participating GP clinics, we hope to create a more connected cancer-care journey for Malaysians."

Expanding the Programme

The long-term vision is to establish a stronger community-based cancer navigation ecosystem in Malaysia, one where doctors are better equipped, patients are better informed and access to specialist care is easier to navigate.