

YourCommunity

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First Malaysian astronaut cares

LONG after his sojourn in space, Malaysia's first *angkasawan* Datuk Dr Sheikh Muszaphar Shukor Al-Masrie has taken up the post of ambassador for the Cervical Cancer Awareness Association (Cares).

Cares was recently launched at Primaanora Medical Centre, Kuala Lumpur.

"I had done cancer research through the Angkasawan programme and from that life-changing experience, my perspective about cancer and the issues of the community and the world have changed, which explains my interest in supporting Cares' efforts," Datuk Dr Sheikh Muszaphar said.

He added that cervical cancer is the leading genital cancer in women and the second most common cancer in Malaysian women after breast cancer with 2,000 to 3,000 hospital admissions in Malaysia.

Cares is a non-profit organisation with an objective to reduce cervical cancer incidences in Malaysia. Cares aims to provide direction and education and most importantly, to create awareness and promote cervical cancer screening and prevention in Malaysia.

In providing education to the public, Cares will chart various types of education programmes through public service opportunities, a website, through local and regional networking amongst professionals and the public, health-related events and dissemination of newsletters to its members.

In addition, Cares serves to link the public to reputable information sources and provides the public and mass media with contacts for spokespersons on specialised cervical cancer and health-related topics.

Cares also works closely with other professional bodies and the government, to support health promotion and education campaigns and seminars for the public.

It also serves to be a platform for those infected to share their experiences with other infected women and women at large.

Cares' medical advisor Datuk Dr Nor Ashikin Mokhtar said this is the right time to set up the NGO as women now have options to protect themselves against cervical cancer as it is a type of cancer that can be prevented unlike other cancers.

"Every two minutes, a woman dies from cervical cancer in the world.

"We can reduce the staggering number of deaths from cervical cancer through screening and vaccination," she said.

For more information about Cares, visit www.primanora.com.