

Do you CARE?

A new non-profit organisation aims to shed light on cervical cancer.

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IN many ways, cervical cancer is like the lesser sibling to breast cancer in the family of malignant diseases that is plaguing the female population today.

While more women are aware of the risk factors of breast cancer and its early detection, many remain relatively ignorant of cervical cancer, which is the leading genital cancer and the second most common cancer in women (after breast cancer) in Malaysia.

"Cervical cancer has always taken a back seat and it is like a silent threat ... but cervical cancer is (also) known as important and known as dangerous," said consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist Datuk Dr Nor Ashikin Mokhtar.

The enormity of the problem can be seen in the numbers that are affected. "Every year, about half a million women have cervical cancer and about a quarter million die, and it is sad to know that every two minutes a woman

dies of cervical cancer," says Dr Nor Ashikin. In Malaysia, an average of about 2,000 to 3,000 women are admitted to hospitals for cervical cancer every year and about 500 die from it.

An awareness association

The good news is cervical cancer is highly preventable and curable if detected and treated early. The problem is, ignorance is standing in the way.

The newly formed Cervical Cancer Awareness Association (CARES) - a Malaysian non-profit organisation - aims to reduce cervical cancer incidence in Malaysia by providing direction and education to create cervical cancer awareness. Launched on July 23, CARES also aims to promote cervical cancer screening and prevention.

This is the right time to set up CARES as women now have options to protect themselves against cervical cancer as it is a type of cancer that can be prevented, unlike many



Protom Committee members of Cervical Cancer Awareness Association (CARES), (left to right) Nisriwani Yahaya, Executive Director of Yayasan Dunia Melayu; Mahani Awang, President of Bumiputra Designers Association; Datuk Dr Sheikh Muszaphar, First Malaysian Angkasawan and Ambassador to CARES; Datuk Dr Nor Ashikin Mokhtar, Medical Advisor to CARES & Executive Chairman of PrimaNora Medical Centre; and Nur Shereen Dzulkiflee, General Manager, PrimaNora Medical Centre.

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