

New surgical technique at Ripas successful

Patients breathe easy after surgery

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PATIENTS of the new surgical technique introduced in Brunei's main hospital were discharged yesterday a week after surgeons succeeded in repairing their chest deformities.

Mohd Khairul Hisham, 16, Mohd Azizan Jofri, 16, and Nuraqilah Hj Norazme, 14, were patients with "Pectus Excavatum", which is caused by a visible deformity in their chests. The condition is also known as sunken, funnel or pigeon chest.

The 'Minimally Invasive Repair' technique involved making one or two incisions in the chest, then inserting a metal bar to 'lift' up the cavity of the torso.

In a brief interview with *The Brunei Times*, the three briefly recalled the pain they felt during the surgery.

"There was a lot of pain," said Mohd Azizan, who said that he said it hurt during and immediately after however painkillers managed to relieve most of the pain.

However, yesterday he said that he barely felt any pain at all without medication.

The three patients noted that they were aware of the metal bar placed in their chest to help repair the condition, but said that they believed they will be able to get used to the feeling. All of them, including their parents, were happy with the results of the surgery.

For them, it was a life-changing event. Nuraqilah said that she no longer needs to feel ashamed of her chest, and that she felt more confi-

dent and comfortable.

"I feel like a normal human being now," she said, smiling. Dr William Chong, head of the Ripas Surgical Department, said that the patients should not perform sports or heavy lifting for a few months because it may be painful for them. He said that the metal bar will remain within them for a minimum of two years before they can remove it.

"After that, their chests should be 'remodelled'," he explained.

The doctor also assured them that it was unlikely they would need to have another metal bar inserted. Other than painkillers, the patients did not require any other medication, he said.

He added that more operations are being planned at the hospital for patients that require the procedure.

On November 21, Mohd Azizan was the first to undergo the new technique introduced to the Raja Isteri Pg Anak Saleha (Ripas) Hospital by Korean specialists. A day after, Mohd Khairul and Nuraqilah underwent the same procedure.

All three operations were successful, and yesterday, after about a week under observation in Ripas, all three students went home to start their school holidays.

The Brunei Times



(Clockwise from above left) Mohd Khairul, Mohd Azizan, and Nuraqilah, three young patients who braved the first 'Minimally Invasive Repair' surgery conducted in Brunei to be 'normal' and avoid future health complications; a chest X-ray of one of the three patients post surgery - the white band across the chest is the metal bar used to 'repair' the chest deformity; a CT scan of a person with a depression of the chest which should be straight in a normal person, prior to the surgery. The depression is seen to be causing a 'compression' of the heart. Pictures: BT/Yusri Adanan



5 Bruneian youths in KL for int'l volunteerism symposium

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THE Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS) sent five youths to represent Brunei at the 'International Symposium on Volunteerism as Catalyst for Nation Building' in Kuala Lumpur.

The four-day symposium which was opened yesterday is organised by the centre and supported by the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the United Nations.

The Brunei Times interviewed one of the representatives on what they expect to gain from the symposium.

"It really opened our eyes to do a higher degree of volunteerism in Brunei," said Zayn Sabri Manaf, 25.

A member of the Believe Youth Association (BYA), he said sharing experiences and knowledge among participants from other countries was very beneficial.

"I met a participant from Cambodia, where he volunteered



Some of the Brunei representatives attending the international symposium on volunteerism in KL. Zayn Sabri (R) from the BYA, Wadi Shahrin (C) from Katak Ijau and Hj Bostamam Lamat (L) from Pusat Belia. Picture: Courtesy from Zayn Sabri Manaf

to help out in Kenya for three whole months and it really showed that volunteerism from a local aspect is just not enough," said Zayn.

Bruneians should participate in charitable work beyond the country, as it would "aspire the locals to gain more experience and knowledge" and acquire a different perspective, he added.

The programme organised in conjunction with the Inter-

national Volunteers Day (December 5) aims to generate awareness of the important value of volunteerism and its effect on human society and national development.

Objectives include exploring the context of volunteerism, identifying areas of development, and establishing the ecosystem for mobilisation of young volunteers.

The Brunei Times

APTK jobseekers' workshop begins

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APPROXIMATELY 300 jobseekers have registered with the Local Work Agency and Workforce Development (APTK) for a workshop themed 'Ready, Mind (Set), Work' that will be held at the Gadong Scouts Centre today.

The workshop focuses on preparing jobseekers for upcoming Job Carnival and for any job application in general.

The programme starts off with a Profiling session, where the jobseekers, using a renowned international tool called HireSuccess, will highlight their most desirable traits.

This will be followed by another profiling tool designed by SkillTech, to measure jobseekers' readiness, taking into account issues that are unique to Brunei, such as family pressure, choosiness, unwillingness to start from the bottom, etc.

The outcome of these profiling

sessions, will be used to complete and better the CV Writing and Interview Skills sessions.

Laila Salleh, managing director of SkillTech Training and Resource Management, described the programme as "young, casual, fun, upbeat and dynamic and is by no means a long lecture like motivational talk".

"I believe that if the jobseekers still need to be motivated, they are not ready to make the first step, which is what this workshop should be," she said.

"This somewhat compact programme includes brief discussions with a selected panel of interesting role models who have exhibited exemplary attitudes in their quest to find a job, a comical film of an interview and of course, the curious profiling exercises," she added.

Members of the public who are interested to attend the workshop which will run until December can still register at the venue today.

The Brunei Times