

# Women's Health Research Symposium Malaysia Report 2024

June 10th and 11th



**MONASH**  
University

# Facilitators and Consensus Panelists

## Facilitators:

Associate Professor Nisha Angela Dominic  
(Monash University Malaysia, CSJB)

Associate Professor Jacqueline Boyle  
(Monash University Australia, EHCS)

Dr Siew Lim  
(Monash University Australia, EHCS)

## Monash University Malaysia

Professor Adeeba Kamarulzaman  
PVC, President MUM

A/Prof Dr T Jayanthi  
Women's Health CSJB

Prof Dr Ravichandran Jeganathan  
Women's Health CSJB (ex-national head  
O&G, NOR)

AP Dr Anil Gandhi  
Surgeon (Breast CA), CSJB

Prof Dr G Letchumanan  
Internal Med, Endocrinologist, CSJB

Dr Sharuna Vergis  
Public Health, Refugee/ Migrant,  
Sunway Monash

Dr Faizul Jaafar  
PhD, Reproductive Neuroendocrinology

Dr Tomoko Soga  
Neuroscience, Infertility, PCOS & PPD

Dr Mageswary Sivalingam  
Neuroscience, PPD

Dr Ramlah Mohd Ibrahim  
Nutritionist, Obesity

Dr Dhurga Devi  
Research Fellow, PhD Microbiology

Dr Fabian Sunil Dass  
Psychiatrist, CSJB

Dr Cindy Niap  
Psychiatrist, CSJB



# Facilitators and Consensus Panelists

## Ministry of Health

Dr Hafiz Abdullah  
O&G Consultant, HSAJB

Matron Marmie  
O&G Matron, HSAJB

Matron Maisarah  
Community Clinic, Tampoi

Sister Julieyeena binti Jamaludin  
Patient Assessment Unit, HSAJB

Dr Kee Ee Kim  
Family Medicine Specialist, Tampoi Clinic

## NGO's

Arquila Kamarudin  
Domestic Violence, Psychologist  
Nafisah Lokman

Project Manager, Johor Outreach and  
Community Centre, UNHCR (Rohinya)

Dr Subatra Jeyaraja  
Chairperson of Reproductive Rights Advocacy  
Alliance Malaysia RRAAM

## Monash University Australia

Professor Patrick Olivier  
Digital Health (ACTION LAB)

## University of Malaya

Dr Anjana Kukreja  
(Microbiologist, HIV expert)

## University of the United Nations

Dr Aparna Mukherjee  
(GenderBased Violence)

## University of Cyberjaya

Prof Dr Shamala Devi Karalasingam  
(ex National Obstetrics Registry Project  
Manager, Obstetrician)



# Overview

## Consensus on Research Topics, Values and Principles Priorities



A women's health research symposium was organised by Monash University Malaysia on 10-11th June 2024 to bring together experts in research, healthcare, advocacy and policy to share existing research and to share priorities and vision for future women's health research.

This was undertaken through presentations of women's health research by contributors, and two group activities: 1) Delphi priority setting process and nominal group technique for a consensus on women's health research priorities and values and principles underpinning the research 2) Recommendations and envisioning future opportunities to progress women's health research in Malaysia



# Activity 1

## Box 1. Women's Health Research Priorities in Malaysia

The following boxes report on the consensus research priorities (Box 1) and values and principles (Box 2) . These were the final priorities arrived at after an initial Delphi online priority setting, followed by a group discussion and then a second online Delphi priority setting. Details of the process will be published separately.

1. Diabetes, healthy weight and lifestyle
2. Non Communicable Disease (apart from diabetes)
3. Preconception, Pregnancy and Postpartum
4. Cancer screening and prevention
5. Mental Health
6. Sexual and reproductive health
7. Perimenopause, menopause and healthy ageing
8. Violence and abuse against women*

*\* Defined by the World Health Organisation as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life” (United Nations. Declaration on the elimination of violence against women. New York : UN, 1993).*

*This includes gender-based violence perpetrated by an intimate partner or ex-partner or a non-partner.*



# Activity 1

## Box 2. Values and Principles of the Research

1. Community education, health literacy, engagement and empowerment (including autonomy and dignity)
2. Primary, secondary and tertiary prevention of disease across all research priorities
3. Multilevel approach* to social determinants of health and equity °
4. Implementation, impact and sustainability (include monitoring and evaluation, translation and dissemination)
5. Research processes require partnership, transparency, governance, priority setting, stakeholder engagement and large-scale collaboration

*\*Multilevel was determined to include the socioecological environments and levers that impact health: political, cultural, community, interpersonal, individual.*

*°Equity was identified as including priority populations and those that experience systemic disadvantage and/or vulnerability such as: indigenous, migrants (including undocumented), refugees, gender diverse individuals, those living in rural and regional areas, and those at the critical life-stages of adolescence, menopause and ageing.*



# Activity 2

## Envisioning Future Opportunities in Women's Health Research Malaysia

### **Increase women's health research visibility and strengthen networks**

Contributors felt strongly that there was a need to raise the visibility of women's health research nationally and to bring all involved in women's health across Malaysia together in both formal and informal networks.

A website dedicated to Women's Health Research was thought to be an initial step to achieving this aim. It would enable networking across community, policy, healthcare and academics, be a vehicle to share research progress and collaborative research and grant opportunities.

Other suggestions included workshops and educational sessions (online and in person) on women's health, women's health research and research methodologies. An annual in person symposium was strongly supported by all contributors.

Strong relationships and transparent processes with the Ministry of Health were thought to be key to facilitating future research.

### **Utilising existing data to improve healthcare systems**

Discussions included the identification of existing clinical datasets such as the National Obstetric Registry which are held by the Ministry of Health but are not currently accessible to health services and researchers.

Data such as this could be used collaboratively to help establish Learning Health Systems and to facilitate value and principle No.5 which includes monitoring and evaluation of research impact.

Looking at data linkage across health services was also thought to be important for learning health systems, particularly as health services gradually move to electronic records.

The South East Asia Community Observatory (SEACO) hosted by Monash University Malaysia was cited as a potential opportunity to be used as an exemplar of integration of preventive, primary and hospital healthcare as it has significant support from Action Lab, Monash University Australia to support digital health initiatives and is linked with Women's Health experts at Monash University Malaysia and Monash University Australia.



# Appendix 1

## Funding Opportunities

### National

National opportunities identified included:

Industry:

- Malaysian Palm Oil
- Science fund

Foundations

- Tunku Laksamana Johor Cancer Foundation
- Sime Darby Foundation

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FRGS : Fundamental research graduate scholarships

### International

Many international opportunities were identified through international research councils including:

- the National Health and Medical Research Council (Australia)
- the Canadian Institute of Health Research
- the National Institute for Health and Care Research (United Kingdom)
- the Medical Research Council (United Kingdom)
- the National Institutes of Health (United States of America)
- the European Union

These would require collaboration with researchers in those countries.

National efforts to support international foreign affairs such as

- the International Development Research Centre (Canda)
- the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)

### Foundations and NGOs

- the Gates foundation
- the Melinda French Gates Foundation
- the Wellcome trust
- the Global Alliance of Chronic Disease
- the IDRC
- the Newton foundation

