

The Usage of Full Name and Registration Number Under the Medical Act 1971 by Registered Medical Practitioners in Official Matters

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this circular is to inform about the usage of full name with the registration number under the Medical Act 1971 by registered medical practitioners in official matters.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Lately, the use of the title 'doctor' or abbreviation 'Dr' has been so widespread.
- 2.2 Besides medicine, graduates from several other fields of studies such as veterinary, dentistry and also PhD doctors are also using this title.
- 2.3 Besides this, formal and recognized fields of studies by the government and also licensed bodies such as in paragraph 2.2, 'graduates' from various study fields from within the country and also overseas whose validity is doubtful are also using the title 'Dr' to carry out various crafty activities. To make it difficult for the authorities to detect them, they use abbreviated names.
- 2.4 The problem of prompting other people to believe that he is a registered professional and qualified to practice this profession not only exists in the medical world but also involves other professions.
- 2.5 To curb such deviations, some professions are making it compulsory for the use of registration number in all official matters.

3. ITEMS INFORMED

- 3.1 Section 32 of the Medical Act 1971 sets that each person who acquire or tries to acquire by way of cheating so that he or any other person is registered by doing or presenting, or causing them to do or presented with a false statement or acknowledgement or cheats, either orally or written, is committing an offence against this Act.
- 3.2 Among the items which are defined to be able to motivate a person to believe that an individual is a registered medical practitioner underlined under Section 33 (1)(a) till (c) Medical Act 1971 as follows:
- '(1) A person who is not registered or not exempted from registration under this Act who:
- (a) Intentionally and falsely pretends as being registered under this Act or as qualified to carry out medical practice or surgery; or
- (b) Intentionally and falsely wearing or using a name or title of doctor, medical doctor and surgeon, medical graduate and surgery, surgeon, general practitioner or medicine man; or
- (c) Intentionally and falsely wearing or using a name, title, additions or matters that provide the understanding that he is registered under this Act or that he is recognized by law as a doctor or surgeon or medical graduate and surgery in medicine or a medicine man;'
- 3.3 Section 33 (2) explains:
- '(a) a person using the word 'doctor' or 'clinic' or 'dispensary' or 'hospital' or a word that is equivalent with these words in another language related with carrying out medical practice or surgery ought to be characterized as using a name, title, additions or matters which is meant to motivate a person to believe that he is qualified to carry out medical or surgery practices according to modern science methods'.
- 3.4 For those who are convicted for the offence of confusing the public following the misuse or usage of the name or title 'Dr', Section 35 of the Medical Act 1971 sets :
- '(1)
- (a) for the first offence, fined not more than two thousand ringgit; and
- (b) for the second time or subsequent offences, fined not more than five thousand ringgit or jailed for a period not more than two years or both;
- (2) Regarding a continuous offence, the person can be imposed a further penalty of fifty ringgit for every day the offence is continued in addition to the penalty under sub section (1) (a) and (b) respectively.'
- 3.5 Often times, the Malaysian Medical Council (MMC) and the Ministry of Health (MOH) receive queries regarding the validity of a medical certificate and medical report as well as the registration of a medical practitioner. However, following the absence of the full name as well as other information of the individual concerned, confirmation

cannot be carried out. This not only affects the image and credibility of the MMC and also the MOH but complicates the applicants of this information.

- 3.6 This disguise and cheating leads to various negative implications. Other than various harms and sufferings to the public, the credibility of a registered medical practitioner becomes threatened, quality of health services will deteriorate, patient's health care is affected and the public's health will be threatened. Next, it is feared this situation will also provide negative impact towards the country's health tourism industry.
- 3.7 Realizing the need to curb such problem from continuing to widespread, the MMC who met on 10 September 2008 decided that all fully registered medical practitioners need to use full name as well as include "full registration number" in all official matters effective 1 January 2009. This encompasses the use of rubber stamps and call cards.
- 3.8 For practitioners who are only temporarily registered under section 16 of the Medical Act 1971, they can use the temporary practicing certificate No. However, they still need to use full name.
- 3.9 For medical practitioners who are not yet fully registered, they can use temporary practicing No. while undergoing graduate training and they are still bonded to use full name. However this group are altogether not allowed to certify any official documents such as medical certificates, medical reports, death certificates, etc because this contradicts with section 27 of the Medical Act 1971 which records as follows :
- '27. No certification or any other letters are required by any written law to be signed by a qualified medical practitioner reasonably and provided after this Act was begun to be enforced can become legal unless if it is signed by a fully registered medical practitioner.'
- 3.10 Based on the full name and registration number of a medical practitioner, the public can confirm their registration by visiting the MMC website at <http://www.mmc.gov.my/> on the Medical Register part.
- 3.11 It is convinced that such an approach will be able to reduce the problems of disguise and cheating by non qualified and irresponsible individuals using the title 'Dr' to carry out crafty activities.

4. IMPLEMENTATION/ACTION

- 4.1 It is the responsibility of each Head of Department to:
- a. Notify the implementation of this circular to all registered medical practitioners under them;
- b. To supply rubber stamps that contain details of full name together with the registration number under the Medical Act 1971 to all medical practitioners registered under it; and
- c. To ensure all registered medical practitioners use full name with the registration number under the Medical Act 1971 in all official matters effective 1 January 2009.

5. USAGE AND ENFORCEMENT DATE

- 5.1 The implementation of this circular is effective 1 January 2009.

6. ENQUIRY

- 6.1 Any queries regarding this circular can be referred to:

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Malaysian Medical Council
Level 2, Block E-1, Block E
Federal Government Administrative Complex
62518 Putrajaya

Tel No: 03 8883 1400 or 1410

Fax No: 03 8883 1406

Email: admin@mmc.gov.my

NOTE: This circular can also be accessed at
[http://mmc.gov.my/v1/docs/2008\(15\).pdf](http://mmc.gov.my/v1/docs/2008(15).pdf) ■