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# Focus On Health Issues Of E-cigarettes, Not On Economic Wellbeing Of Dealers - MMA

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 21 (Bernama) -- Discussions on e-cigarettes should focus on health issues rather than the economic well-being of the dealers, said the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) president Dr Ashok Zachariah Philip.

He said e-cigarettes also had not been around long enough for anyone to claim with certainty that they were safe for long-term use as long-term damage to the organs might take 15 or 20 years to develop.

"Common sense and caution suggest that inhaling volatile active chemicals into delicate tissue lining the air sacs of the lung is more likely than to have damaging effects," he said in a statement here Saturday.

Dr Ashok Zachariah suggested that further studies were needed to elucidate many pro-vaping activists' claim that e-cigarettes were 95 percent safer than cigarettes.

"If it is true that e-cigarettes are significantly more effective on smoking cessation, then it can be offered as a therapeutic option in smoking cessation clinic," he said.

"However, many people who now vape have never smoked before. Many young people, seduced by the 'cool factor' and buying the propaganda that e-cigarettes are harmless, have taken up this habit.

"Even if e-cigarettes are only five percent as harmful as tobacco cigarettes, this not a trivial health risk for someone who has never smoked," he said.

He also added that although e-cigarettes users claimed that the liquids used in e-cigarettes contain only 'safe' substances like food colourings and flavourings with small amounts of nicotine and propylene glycol, the substances had not been tested as inhalants.

"I believe that the benefits of vaping are either limited or illusory, while the potential ill-effects, especially to the young, are very real.

"The MMA strongly supports the Ministry of Health in its initiatives against vaping, which are clearly motivated by concern for public health," he said.

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