

Malaysia

## Doctors: We were told items had run out

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NOVEMBER 09, 2015



Krishna said many clinics were interested in the kits and wanted to get them to help their patients, considering the high cost. — Reuters pic

PETALING JAYA, Nov 9 — Former Malaysian Medical Association president Dr H. Krishna Kumar has denied that private clinics were not interested in the free dengue test kits offered by the Health Ministry.

“Many complained of not getting the kits and others who asked for more didn’t get them,” he told *Malay Mail*.

“The clinics were supposed to return used kits to get new ones but were told the kits had run out.”

The gynaecologist headed the association when Ops Mega was held from July to September last year. Some 55,000 test kits were acquired by the Health Ministry during that period but only 5,000 were distributed.

Dr Krishna said many clinics were interested in the kits and wanted to get them to help their patients, considering the high

cost.

“The kits cost between RM80 to RM100 and patients could not afford them,” he said.

General practitioners who received the test kits claimed they were only given a limited supply.

Medical Practitioners Coalition Association of Malaysia deputy president Dr Raj Kumar Maharajah said he received two boxes of 10 kits but was told supply had run out when he made a third request.

“The ministry said it needed time to replenish the stock,” said the doctor, who operates a clinic in Dengkil.

“The kits definitely helped because in this area, people cannot afford to pay for the kits, along with the medication. I was begging for more kits because they were free, but I did not get them.”

Dr Raj Kumar said many GPs were interested in the kits after he wrote about it in a Facebook group for doctors.

“Many wanted to know more about the kits and asked how to get them for free,” he said.

Dr Baljit Kaulsay, who runs a clinic in Damansara Heights, said he received two boxes of 10 kits each last year.

He said he took up the offer by the ministry to ease the burden of the people.

“Because of the high cost, patients suspected of dengue opted to be admitted in hospitals, hoping insurance would cover the cost, leading to overcrowding in hospitals,” he said

Another doctor, who operates a clinic in Petaling Jaya, said he would be “very happy” if the ministry decided to give out free dengue kits again.

“The kits help with early detection of the virus and allows immediate referral of patients to hospitals,” he said.

“Milder cases can be treated with medication and will reduce hospital congestion.”

