

MMA: Clinical consultation in person the most secure - Nation | The Star Online

PETALING JAYA: Clinical consultations are best done in person to protect patient confidentiality, Malaysian Medical Association president Dr Ashok Zachariah Philip said.

While some social media sites might offer end-to-end encryption services, he said there was still a risk of the information falling into the wrong hands.

“A person who gets the information may rat it out, or someone else may see it and spread the information further.

“Social media is a platform for sharing, so if you want to keep things confidential it is best to keep them away from social media,” he told *The Star*.

The Health Ministry has issued a directive to doctors in government service, telling them not to discuss patients' medical cases or conduct consultation on social media.

Dr Ashok agreed, saying that nothing trumped face-to-face communication during clinical consultation in a secure environment.

“If not done in person, it should at least be done through a recognised telemedicine facility, where it is only for doctors and patients, and the site must be well secured,” he said.

Dr Ashok believed the ministry's directive was meant to prevent doctors taking to social media to share work-related posts that were considered inappropriate.

“For example, doctors can get upset in the course of their work and vent their frustrations on social media, but that should be a no-no.”

“It may be directed at a close group of friends and acquaintances but there is always a possibility of the post being shared,” he said.

Last year, a doctor in Johor Baru was photographed while attending to a patient in labour, wearing a face mask and flashing a peace sign.

The patient's private parts were clearly visible in the photograph. The posting went viral on Facebook, leading to much public anger.

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