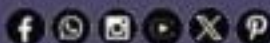


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The HEALTH



Pioneering a new era

UTAR Hospital Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Medical Director Dato' Dr Ding Lay Ming shares how the hospital is redefining accessible, high-quality healthcare by seamlessly integrating modern medicine with traditional healing. **P08-10**

Multifocal
lens magic
p12

Pioneering future
healthcare
p16

Early detection,
better protection
p18-21



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08

P04-05 | Local News

- **Setting new regulations**
- **IJN leads urgent reform**

P06-07 | Foreign News

- **Global healthcare, local impact**
- **Reducing waiting times**

P08-10 | Cover Story

Bridging modern and traditional medicines

UTAR Hospital provides specialist care to underserved communities in Kampar and surrounding areas

P12

Multifocal lens magic

Understanding digital eye strain and the multifocal lens solutions for modern vision challenges

P13

Astigmatism awareness matters

Exploring the link between astigmatism and digital eye strain and the importance of effective vision correction.

P14-15

Protect your vision

Understanding the causes, symptoms, and the impact of increased screen time in modern life

P16

Transforming prostate health

UPM Urology and HSAAS are positioning themselves as a global leader in prostate health.



P18-19

Early detection, better protection

CKD highlights the need for comprehensive healthcare strategies to reduce risks

SMART PARTNERSHIP



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PERSATUAN SEPSIS MALAYSIA
(MySepsis)



PERSATUAN NURSEJAHTERA, MALAYSIA
(MALAYSIAN WELLNESS SOCIETY)



12



P20
Pioneering future healthcare
The SEA Healthcare and Pharma Conference 2025 is set to launch in Kuala Lumpur.

P22-23
Silent modern epidemic
Excessive social media use, binge-watching, and mindless scrolling weaken cognitive functions

P24
There's a disc in my knee?
Unlike typical menisci, which are C-shaped, a discoid meniscus is thicker and more disc-like



P25
Fries, but at what cost?
High-fat diets can rapidly harm brain function.

P26
Mindfulness helps the brain
Scientific studies show that mindfulness can reduce the size of the amygdala and increase grey matter

P27
Quo vadis, Malaysia?
The sharp increase in private healthcare insurance premiums makes it difficult for many in the M40 group.

The HEALTH says...

Fees and fairness

THE ongoing discussion about raising consultation fees by Malaysian private general practitioners (GPs) reflects the larger issues in the healthcare sector.

The Federation of Private Medical Practitioners Associations Malaysia (FPMPAM) is pushing for a fee revision. This conversation is happening against a backdrop of rising medical costs and inflation that have increased significantly over the last twenty years.

FPMPAM President Dr Shanmuganathan Ganeson pointed out that consultation fees had not changed for 19 years, highlighting the gap between healthcare costs and actual economic conditions.

With rising expenses for rent, utilities, and medical supplies, GPs find themselves struggling with a fee structure that is no longer effective, threatening the future of many small clinics. The proposed increase in fees from RM10-RM35 to RM50-RM150 is presented as a necessary change rather than just a way to make more money, but it raises significant concerns among the public.

Higher fees could place more strain on middle-income families, possibly pushing them towards an already stressed public healthcare system. The risk of worsening inequalities in healthcare access is significant and should not be ignored.

This situation presents a complex mix of financial needs and ethical health services. On one side, GPs need fair pay to keep their practices running; on the other, healthcare must remain affordable for everyone. The main issue is how the government and private sector can work together to maintain the financial health of medical practices while ensuring that the public has access to essential healthcare services.

Regulations need to adapt alongside these fee changes. For example, better transparency in drug prices is vital for building trust between patients and healthcare providers. The government must play an active role in creating a system that controls drug prices while allowing consultation fees to reflect actual service costs.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad mentioned in Parliament that the ministry is working with the Department of Statistics Malaysia to figure out reasonable consultation fees for private GPs. The department will gather and analyse data to ensure accurate information in this process.

Overall, the discussion about raising consultation fees should lead to a broader conversation about our healthcare system. When looking at fee changes, we must also think about improving service quality and ensuring fair access to care.

This all-encompassing approach will not only help keep private practices viable but also protect the health of the public, creating a healthcare environment that values both provider sustainability and patient welfare.

Finding a balance between fair pay for GPs and affordability for patients is challenging. As the government and associations discuss this issue, they must ensure that today's decisions do not lead to more significant problems in the future.

A careful and cooperative approach will be crucial in building a healthcare system that benefits all Malaysians.

Silent modern epidemic

- Excessive social media use, binge-watching, and mindless scrolling weaken cognitive functions.
- Islam promoted a balanced, purposeful life through mindful consumption of information.
- Just as halal food nourishes the body, consuming knowledge-driven content nourishes the mind and soul.



BY AMAL
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TODAY'S world is bombarded with distractions - social media notifications, endless video reels, viral challenges, and mindless scrolling. While these activities seem harmless, they are slowly corroding our brains, leading to a phenomenon we can call brain corrosion.

Just like metal rusts when exposed to water and air for too long, our brains also degrade when exposed to meaningless content, digital overstimulation, and a lack of purposeful engagement.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE BRAIN

We live in a digital age where information is abundant, but wisdom feels increasingly scarce. It is hard to ignore how social media has become a central part of our lives - how we instinctively reach for our phones during moments of boredom or downtime.

Studies show that excessive social media use is rewiring our brains, shrinking our attention spans, and fuelling a culture of dopamine addiction. But what does this mean for our cognitive functions, emotional well-being, and daily habits?

1. Platforms like TikTok, Instagram Reels, and Twitter train our brains to consume information in bite-sized pieces. Over time, this weakens our ability to focus on more profound, more meaningful content such as books, study, or introspection.
2. Our brain releases dopamine whenever we get a like, comment, or notification. This creates a cycle where we constantly seek instant gratification, making us impatient and restless.
3. Social media feeds are filled with unrealistic portrayals of life, success, and beauty. Constant exposure to these images leads to low self-esteem, anxiety, and dissatisfaction.
4. Instead of experiencing real-life joys, conversations, and relationships, people spend hours in a digital bubble, disconnecting from the world around them.

This results in a weakened mind, reduced cognitive function, and a feeling of emptiness despite being "connected" all the time.

"Studies show that excessive social media use is rewiring our brains, shrinking our attention spans, and fuelling a culture of dopamine addiction. But what does this mean for our cognitive functions, emotional well-being, and daily habits?"

DEATH OF DEEP THINKING

Beyond social media, other forms of digital entertainment, such as binge-watching shows, gaming for long hours, and excessive consumption of useless gossip, also contribute to brain corrosion.

The less we think deeply, the weaker our ability to solve problems, innovate, and reflect on life.

Moreover, excessive exposure to meaningless entertainment leads to intellectual laziness and reduces our capacity to engage in meaningful conversations.

We are losing the ability to sit in silence, reflect, and seek knowledge - all of which are essential for spiritual and personal growth (Shanmugasundaram and Tamilarasu, 2023).

In a world that's constantly vying for our attention, it's easy to lose sight of what truly matters. The question we must ask ourselves is this: are we trading our capacity for deep thinking and meaningful connection for the fleeting pleasures of digital distraction? And if so, how do we reclaim what we've lost?

LIFESTYLE OF PURPOSE

Islam provides a structured, disciplined way of life that naturally combats

brain corrosion. The halal and toyyib way of living is not just about food - it extends to what we consume mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Islam encourages productivity, reflection, and balance, ensuring our minds remain strong and engaged in meaningful pursuits.

1. Protecting the mind with purposeful engagement

Ibn Abbas reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

"Take advantage of five before five: your youth before your old age, your health before your illness, your riches before your poverty, your free time before your work, and your life before your death"- [Shu'ab al-Imān lil-Bayhaqi 10250]

Islam teaches us to use our time wisely. Engaging in activities that bring knowledge, personal growth, and spiritual fulfilment prevents mental decay. Instead of mindless scrolling, we are encouraged to read and seek beneficial knowledge, engage in productive work and hobbies, spend time remembering Allah SWT (dhikr), and reflect on our purpose and goals.

2. Social media in moderation: The concept of balance

Islam does not prohibit enjoyment but promotes moderation. The Quran states:

"Do not follow what you have no 'sure' knowledge of. Indeed, all will be called to account for 'their' hearing, sight, and intellect" - [Quran, Al-Isra, 17:36].

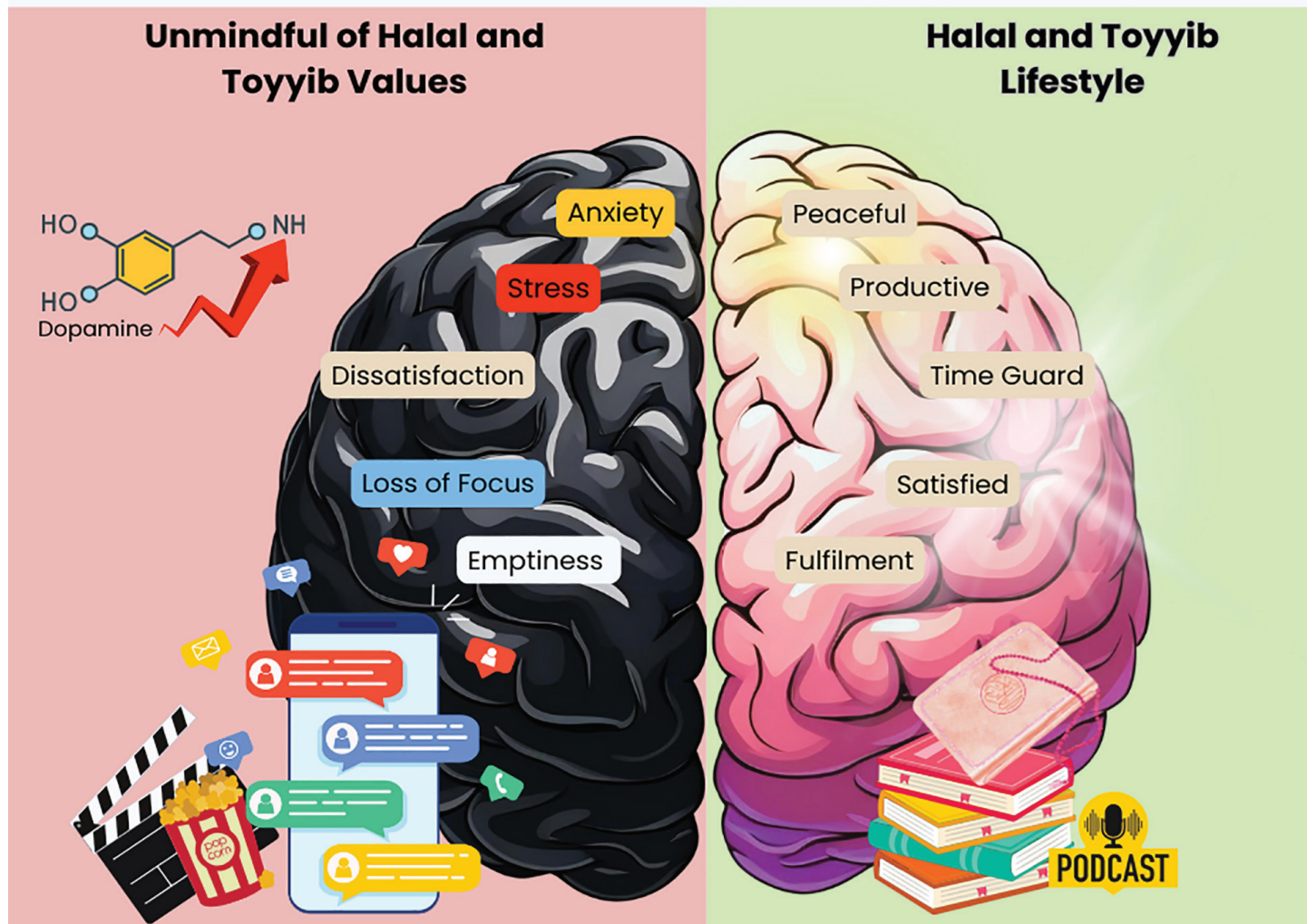
This verse emphasises the importance of mindful consumption of information, reminding us that we will be held accountable for spending our time - whether we invested it wisely or wasted it on trivial pursuits. Islam teaches that enjoyment and relaxation are permissible, but they must be balanced with meaningful pursuits and spiritual growth.

3. Seeking mental clarity through prayer and reflection

One of the most powerful tools to prevent brain corrosion is prayer. Regular prayer drives us to disconnect from the world's noise and reconnect with Allah SWT.

Brain Corrosion

Protect Your Mind



The physical actions of prayer, combined with deep concentration, act as a mental reset, similar to mindfulness and meditation. The Quran states:

"Those who believe and whose hearts find comfort in the remembrance of Allah. Surely in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find comfort." [Quran, Ar-Ra'd, 13:28]

Scientific research confirms that prayer and meditation reduce stress, improve focus, and enhance overall brain function. A few minutes of sincere dua'a (supplication) and reflection daily can restore mental clarity and prevent spiritual and intellectual rust (Callender, Ong & Othman, 2022).

4. The power of a Toyyib life-style: Eating and thinking clean

The concept of a Tayyib lifestyle extends far beyond what we put on our plates. It includes everything we consume - whether through our eyes, ears, or hearts.

As we are mindful of eating what is pure and beneficial, we should also seek out content that nourishes the soul rather than indulging in toxic, meaningless entertainment that corrodes the mind.

A toyyib life also encourages us to choose halal work, engage in ethical business practices, and cultivate pure,

meaningful relationships that add true value to our lives. A toyyib lifestyle fosters gratitude and mindfulness.

When we consciously choose purity in all aspects of life, we break free from the cycle of dissatisfaction and spiritual emptiness. Our minds stay sharp, our hearts remain light, and our actions carry lasting meaning.

PREVENTING BRAIN CORROSION

Combating mental fatigue and overstimulation starts with limiting screen time and reducing exposure to unproductive content. Regular digital breaks encourage real-life engagement and mental clarity.

Replacing passive scrolling with meaningful activities - such as reading, learning new skills, or listening to beneficial lectures and podcasts - keeps the mind active and sharp.

Daily prayer and dhikr provide organisation and reflection, helping to clear mental clutter and maintain focus.

Surrounding oneself with positive influences promotes discipline while avoiding environments filled with gossip and negativity, which preserves mental well-being.

Toyyib lifestyle further supports brain health through wholesome foods,

sufficient rest, and physical activity.

Minimising trivial distractions ensures time and energy are directed toward purposeful and beneficial pursuits, in line with Islamic principles of balance and mindfulness.

TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE

Brain corrosion is real! The mind is a trust, and preserving its health is a responsibility. In an era dominated by distractions, the need for conscious, intentional living has never been greater.

A life rooted in meaningful action, reflection, and balance enhances cognitive strength and nurtures spiritual and emotional well-being.

Islamic teachings offer a comprehensive guide to cultivating this purposeful existence.

They encourage halal and toyyib living, which cuts across the wise use of time, the pursuit of beneficial knowledge, and engagement in actions that bring lasting value.

Embracing these principles creates space for clarity, focus, and peace in a world that often pulls in the opposite direction.

Before the next mindless scroll, pause and ask: is this moment an investment in the mind - or a withdrawal from it? - **THE HEALTH**

"As we are mindful of eating what is pure and beneficial, we should also seek out content that nourishes the soul rather than indulging in toxic, meaningless entertainment that corrodes the mind."