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Elderly in remote village get orthopaedic care

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Referring the patient, the doctor in charge of the village attending to a patient during the screening session at Sharks, Sarawak.

KUCHING: More than 50 elderly patients from the Kabili-Sungai Asap Orang Ulu longhouse in Ulu Ai in Bintulu Division in highlands received specialised orthopaedic care during a one-day camp by Yayasan Kesemran Orang Asli (YKOA).

The camp on Dec 9 was following another mission held in the longhouse in October, which saw 55 children from the indigenous community receive vital paediatric treatment.

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The camp, organised under the Health Beyond Boundaries Medical Outreach Programme, was held in a village school in the mountains of Bario, accessible only by 12-hour drive from Miri or a 7min-Drive aircraft.

Bolstering its commitment to YKOA, the event was conducted by orthopaedic specialists Dr. Thiru Kumaran and Dr Peter Chew, who diligently reviewed and treated the elderly patients.

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The on-the-spot treatment addressed knee/ankle, strains, sprains and muscle stiffness, thus achieving the event's objectives and alleviating fears about getting to the hospital.

Most post-event discussions with Dr Thiru, who is also Hospital Miri head of orthopaedic service, more than 25 patients underwent orthopaedic consultations and were given a referral pathway, the statement said.

YKOA chairman Dr Ahmad Bin Kata emphasised the significance of preventive screening to enhance the quality of life for the elderly.

Citing challenges like poor access to specialists, the burden of orthopaedic conditions in remote areas, Dr Ahmad Bin Kata outlined the event's purpose, as a holistic approach, treating ailments and encouraging indigenous individuals to seek follow-up or surgical care in Miri or Kuching.
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Dr Andre thanked the sponsors like BCM Alliance, the Australian High Commission and others for funding the event.

The statement added that event organising chairman Datin Pearl Manoa also presented physiotherapy equipment units, given to the hospital's ICU, to families with elderly members and demonstrated their use.

YKOA was founded in Kuala Lumpur in 1974 and in 2002 to elevate indigenous livelihood and preserve their culture.

The Health Beyond Boundaries Medical Outreach Programme is a series of medical camps that aim to impact indigenous folks nationwide, targeting remote villages facing lack of access.

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