

## ORAL PRESENTATION

### Perception of Halal Pharmaceuticals among State Hospital Outpatients in Perlis, Malaysia

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**Objectives:** Halal pharmaceuticals have expanded globally, which is one of the elements in Shariah compliance hospitals. With the emergence of COVID-19 vaccines, the 'Halal' status has become a debate causing some to reject it. The aim of this study was to explore the perception of halal pharmaceuticals among hospital outpatients.

**Methods:** A qualitative study by in-depth interviews were conducted among adult Muslim outpatients collecting their medications. A Malay language semi-structured interview guide was prepared and underwent content trustworthiness by the State Mufti, a Malaysian pharmacy professor, two pharmacists with a special interest in Halal pharmaceuticals and two Islamic affairs officers in the Ministry of Health Malaysia. Subjects were recruited in the waiting area of the outpatient pharmacy, Hospital Tuanku Fauziah (HTF). Interview sessions were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were back-translated in English and analysed using thematic content analysis.

**Results:** Ten outpatients were interviewed in which data saturation was reached. Overall, the patients were proactive in observing the label to ensure they received the correct medications. However, all patients were unfamiliar and not curious about the concepts of 'halal pharmaceuticals' and 'Shariah-compliant hospital'. The patients also trusted that the government would provide only the safest and halal medicines. Most patients did not prioritise halal status while choosing their medicines. However, if options were available, most would choose halal medication regardless of its price and effectiveness. They still would consent to receive non-halal treatments for life-saving conditions.

**Conclusion:** There was a good perception of halal pharmaceuticals among outpatients in HTF. There are many opportunities for patient education on this topic as the public is currently not familiar with the terms and halal concepts in medical settings.

**Keywords:** Islam, Exploratory behaviour, Trust, Pharmaceutical preparations, Halal

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