

Drive to get more stem cell donors

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Extracting a sample of blood in preparation for stem cell therapy.

SIBU: The Sarawak Children's Cancer Society in collaboration with Sibü Cancer Care Society and Rejang Medical Centre will be organising a Blood Stem Cell Donor Drive donors for patients suffering from blood related diseases in Malaysia, especially in the state.

The event will take place on Dec 14 to 15 from 2pm to 5pm at Rejang Medical Centre.

According to a spokesman from the society, to supplement the drive, an educational talk on stem cell donation given by medical doctors will be held at 7pm on Dec 13 at Level 7 & 8, Wisma Hua Wen Du Zhong, in

both English and Mandarin.

They hope at least 150 Sibuh donors will register at this event.

“The society has hosted four donor drives this year, with 195 sign-ups. We are working in collaboration with the Malaysian Stem Cell Registry (MSCR) in Institute for Medical Research, Kuala Lumpur to increase the number of blood stem cell donors in Sarawak, as part of the society’s mission to provide care and support for childhood cancer patients,” he said.

He added that the increasing number of patients suffering from blood-related diseases (such as leukaemia, aplastic anaemia, lymphoma, etc.) each year has resulted in greater need for blood stem cells transplantation for the treatments.

Individuals who want to volunteer as a blood stem cell donor should be Malaysian citizens aged between 18 to 50 years old, healthy and free from any chronic diseases.

To date, there are 33,450 registered volunteers in MSCR, of which 1,500 are Sarawakian.

“Due to the diversity of race and intermarriage among Malaysians, the probability of finding a matching donor for a patient is very low, especially for patients from Sarawak as the volunteers of Sarawakian ethnicity account for only about 4% of the number of existing volunteers,” the spokesman said.

He said should a donor be a match for a patient, they will be contacted by MSCR to confirm the donation.

Sarawak Children’s Cancer Society can be contacted at 082-686276 or email events@sccs.org.my.

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