

Volume 6, No. 1 (Supplement)

June 2011

ISSN 1823-2140

The National University
with an
INTERNATIONAL REACH




UNIVERSITI
KEBANGSAAN
MALAYSIA
National University of Malaysia

MEDICINE & Health

The Official Journal of The Faculty of Medicine UKM




7th
Malaysia Indonesia Brunei
Medical Sciences Conference
**"TOWARDS A HOLISTIC AND INTEGRATIVE
APPROACH IN HEALTHCARE"**



22nd - 24th July 2011
Equatorial Hotel, Bangi, Selangor,
MALAYSIA

officiated by
Y.B Datuk Rosnah Haji Abdul Rashid Shirlin
Deputy Minister of Health Malaysia

Organised by



ABANDONED BABIES

Sopian I

Social Welfare Department, Sarawak, Malaysia

As Malaysia gears for many unprecedented challenges working towards achieving her develop nation status, it also faces an increase in the complexity of social problems. Baby Abandonment isn't a new dilemma but frequently grab the headlines in recent years. The official statistics indicate that annually about 100 babies are dumped or an incident of about 2 case per 10,000 live births. Mothers who commit act of public abandonment which in some leads to neonaticide are predominantly young single student/factory worker/salesgirl, could also be a married woman with little support, who is left in the lurch with an unplanned pregnancy.

Some resourceful women find an early solution to their predicament. The unfortunate ones may just discard the newborn child. The worrying issue has surfaced in the form of a changing demographic where bright, young, educated undergraduates at the brink of a promising life and career are arrested for this despicable act. Circumstances leading to unwanted babies include extramarital paternity, rape, illegitimacy, incestuous relationship, child born with abnormalities and also in few cases mothers perceived the baby as an obstacle to personal achievement.

A decade ago, the Malaysian government has considered a 'baby bank' as a means of ameliorating the problem and to save the abandoned babies, the initiative received a mixed response with many opposing the idea. A revised perspective is required considering the persistence of the issue. The Social Welfare Department since its set up has been responsible for the protection, care, rehabilitation, development and reintegration of her target groups especially community in such unfortunate circumstances. The Department also provide care and protection for abandoned babies and those who were born to unwed mothers to be cared for at the children's home or foster out and to be adopted with suitable families. On the other hand, non government organization (NGO's), registered under the Social Welfare Department urged to function as refuge centres providing appropriate support services for the mother and child. As a preventive measure, there should be more awareness and counselling programmes, reproductive health and sexual education and broader family development programmes to be carried out especially for the high risk target groups within the community.