Focus on medical courses

Friday, 20 Sep 2019

By ZAZALIMUSA

NEWCASTLE University Medicine Malaysia (NUMed) will continue to position itself as among the most preferred tertiary medical related-course providers in the region.

Its chief executive officer and provost, Prof Christopher Baldwin, said NUMed’s campus at EduCity in Iskandar Puteri, Johor, had grown organically, from 24 students in 2009 to 800 last year, with 100 teaching and 50 non-teaching staff.

“Out of 800 undergraduates doing medicine in our campus here, 685 are Malaysians and 115 foreign students comprising 26 nationalities,” he told StarMetro in an interview.

The foreign students were from countries such as Australia, India, Indonesia, Maldives and Sri Lanka.
He said NUMed Malaysia started offering degrees in medicine (MBBS) in 2009, followed by degrees in biomedical sciences (BMS) in 2013, and foundation study in 2015.

“We offer affordable British education in Malaysia and our campus in Iskandar Malaysia is well-positioned to attract students from the region,” he added.

It cost RM95,000 a year to do a medical degree at NUMed Malaysia campus compared with RM160,000 per year for a similar course in the UK.

Prof Baldwin said Malaysia and the UK had a long history when it comes to education, with many Malaysians choosing UK universities to further their studies.

He said medical undergraduates would carry out their clinical programmes throughout their five-year medical course at public hospitals and health clinics in Johor, with the main clinical programmes in the last three years.

“It is good exposure for our undergraduates to experience the real-life situation in public hospitals and health clinics as these establishments offer different perspectives in the medicine world,” said Prof Baldwin.

Presently, the undergraduates did their clinical programmes at seven public hospitals in the state: Sultanah Aminah Hospital Johor Baru; Sultan Ismail Hospital Johor Baru; Enche Hajah Besar Hospital in Kluang; Pontian Hospital; Kota Tinggi Hospital; Sultanah Nora Ismail Hospital Batu Pahat; and Permai Hospital in Tampoi, Johor Baru for psychiatry patients.

NUMed undergraduates also did their clinical programmes with non-governmental organisations offering after-care services for terminally-ill patients.

“We are looking at several more public hospitals and health clinics in the state and have sent our request to the relevant authorities for approval,” Prof Baldwin said.

The main focus for the clinical programmes is at public hospitals as upon graduation, the graduates will do their housemanship there.

Prof Baldwin said the university planned to increase the number of undergraduates taking the MBBS course to 900 within the next four to five years, and 50 to 100 students for the biomedical science and foundation programmes respectively.

“We also want to reach out to primary schools to create awareness on medicine studies among pupils aged between nine and 11 years as we believe in starting them young,” he said, adding the university also had plans to start post-graduate programmes in the future.