

IMU Cares launches book in support of deaf community

➤ Sign language interpreters benefit from medical terminology shared in book

IN an effort to raise awareness on the needs of the deaf and hard-of-hearing community, the office of community engagement and sustainability at International Medical University (IMU), also known as IMU Cares, has recently launched a publication, 'Medical Basics for Sign Language Interpreters'. It is aimed at upskilling sign language interpreters to master the basics of medical terminology and health related disciplines, so that they can translate effectively for the deaf community.

The book is essential as it provides sign language interpreters with the foundational knowledge of medical terminology, which is necessary to navigate the complexities of healthcare communication between doctors, and deaf and hard-of-hearing patients.

The beneficiaries of the book not only include deaf and hard-of-hearing patients, but also healthcare providers, healthcare institutions and deaf community organisations, who can leverage on this resource to train interpreters and support initiatives aimed at improving healthcare access for the community.

The book launch held at IMU's Bukit Jalil campus, was part of its 'Deaf Awareness Initiative', to actively engage students and staff in fostering inclusivity and equity for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community.

"Our goal, to shape IMU into a deaf-aware university, and since the pandemic, we've made great strides

toward this vision," said the Dean for Community Engagement and Sustainability, Professor Khoo Suan Phaik.

"At our Bukit Jalil and Seremban campuses, we conduct deaf awareness activities and offer sign language courses for students. We also provide health screenings for the deaf community, collaborating with deaf school teachers who interpret for the families. Across our four campuses—Bukit Jalil, Seremban, Batu Pahat, and Kluang—our teams work actively.

"In Batu Pahat, our students and staff visit the local deaf school to offer digital and social media literacy, fostering a supportive and accessible learning environment for the deaf community," he said.

Professor Suneet Sood, the lead for the book project, said: "This will greatly improve the quality and accuracy of communication when

the interpreters translate from deaf patients to healthcare workers and vice versa."

President and founder of the Interpreters and Translators Association for Selangor and Kuala Lumpur Deaf Community (JUPEBIM), Lucy Lim, shared invaluable insights into her work, emphasising the critical role of language accessibility in equitable healthcare.

"This resource deepens interpreters' medical knowledge, ultimately improving the quality of care for deaf and hard-of-hearing patients by fostering connections that truly matter," she said.

Her words underscored the book's potential to transform healthcare experiences, helping interpreters bridge gaps and create inclusive environments within medical settings.

During the launch, a mock cheque



From left: Adibah Hakimi, author of book, Dr Dorothy D'Anne, advocate for the deaf community, Lim, Zubaidah, Suneet, Prof Khoo, Prof George and staff of IMU who supported the book project. Front row: deaf students from SK Pendidikan Khas, Jalan Peel, KL

presentation was made to Professor Dr Zubaidah Ibrahim Bell, adviser of JUPEBIM by IMU University's Group Managing Director, Professor Gerard George, for their activities.

The programme also featured a sign language performance by deaf

students from SK Pendidikan Khas, Jalan Peel, who captivated the audience with their rendition of 'Sahabat' by Najwa Latif and 'What a Wonderful World' by Louis Armstrong, celebrating inclusivity and resilience.