



Welcoming Message from the President of PPPKAM

Dear distinguished guests, esteemed colleagues, and fellow public health professionals,

As President of Persatuan Pakar Perubatan Kesihatan Awam Malaysia (PPPKAM), it is my privilege to welcome you to the 12th National Public Health Conference, held in conjunction with the 26th NIH

Scientific Conference. This gathering is a testament to our collective commitment to advancing public health in an era marked by unprecedented challenges and opportunities.

The theme of this year's conference, Embracing the New Era: Advancing Public Health Through AI and Digitalisation, aptly reflects the pressing need to adapt to a rapidly evolving world. The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us valuable lessons—reminding us of our vulnerabilities while demonstrating the critical importance of preparedness, collaboration, and resilience in public health. It exposed gaps in our systems, underscored the interconnectedness of global health, and reaffirmed the need for trust and transparency in all our efforts.

We stand at a critical juncture, facing a future shaped by impending pandemics, the re-emergence of infectious diseases, and the threat of zoonoses. Non-communicable diseases continue to pose a significant burden, while planetary health challenges, driven by climate change and environmental degradation, threaten the foundations of human and ecological well-being. Adding to this complexity is the demographic shift toward an ageing population, bringing with it a rise in age-related diseases and increased demands on healthcare systems.

This evolving landscape is compounded by the characteristics of what is now described as a BANI world—Brittle, Anxious, Nonlinear, and Incomprehensible. We must prepare for fragile systems prone to collapse, pervasive societal anxieties, the unpredictable outcomes of nonlinear crises, and the often incomprehensible pace of technological advancements.

In this context, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digitalisation offer transformative potential. These tools can enhance our capacity for evidence-based policymaking, enabling us to identify emerging health trends, allocate resources more effectively, and develop targeted interventions. AI can also play a pivotal role in health education and community engagement by delivering accurate and timely information, addressing misinformation, and fostering stronger connections with the communities we serve.

However, we must use these technologies wisely. AI is not a substitute for human judgment and compassion. It is a tool that must be wielded ethically, inclusively, and with a focus on equity. The lessons of COVID-19 remind us that trust, transparency, and meaningful engagement are indispensable in public health. Technology must be integrated into our strategies as an enabler, not a replacement for these core values.

This conference provides a platform to explore innovative approaches, share experiences, and develop actionable solutions to the multifaceted challenges we face. It is an opportunity to learn from one another and to reimagine how we can use technology to strengthen public health systems while addressing the socio-economic, environmental, and demographic shifts that lie ahead.

I encourage each of you to engage fully in the discussions, share your insights, and collaborate in shaping a vision for the future of public health. Together, we can navigate these uncertainties and build a healthier, more sustainable world for all.

Thank you, and I wish you a productive and inspiring conference.

Advisor of the Organising Committee,

Professor Dr Jamalludin bin Ab Rahman
President of the *Persatuan Pakar Perubatan Kesihatan Awam Malaysia (PPPKAM)*