

COMPLETION REPORT

A comparative study of drug addiction rehabilitation between Japan and Malaysia: Feasibility of setting up similar centers in Malaysia

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The research was carried out according to the agreed plan, even though extra time was needed. To really learn how to help drug addicts as successfully done by drug addiction rehabilitation center (DARC), a few visits were made, including a center in South Korea. The visit to Korea was done on the 24th of December 2015 by two researchers. We were briefed regarding drug addiction in South Korea and the treatment given. We had the chance to tour the facility and have a general idea what is going on there.

The visit to Japan covered DARC centers in Tokyo and Sapporo, out of about fifty facilities in Japan. We managed to visit two centers in Tokyo and interact with both the staff and patients getting treatment and undergoing rehabilitation. We were very lucky to have the chance to meet Mr. Tsuneo Kondo himself who has established and started DARC in Tokyo during one of the meetings.

The visits were very useful and informative. We have learned the following things during the visits.

First; we are dealing with different population of drug addicts. In Malaysia there are more variety of drug of abuse, there are opiate and amphetamine-type drugs, whereas in Japan it is limited to mainly amphetamine-type.

Second; the drug abusers in Japan tends to be younger, due to the fact that drug addiction problem in Japan is relatively new compared to Malaysia. One similarity is amphetamine-type abusers in Malaysia are relatively young as well.

Third; is the most important. It is learning how to approach drug addicts differently. In Malaysia there are clinics under Ministry of Health for treating those people with drug addiction problem. We are treating mainly opiate addiction using methadone replacement therapy. The availability of community-driven organization in helping drug addicts is not widely established. In Japan there many DARC's.

They have medical staff coming to the main centers offering medical help that the patients might need. They have counsellors providing counselling services. However, the main activity at the centers is group counselling. This is the beauty of the program. Group counselling promotes self-reliance. This is a critical aspect to be considered by drug addicts as they should not rely on others too much to help them. Group counselling also provides a comfortable environment for them to talk to each other, to support, comfort and rebuild self-confidence.

Back in Malaysia, we are still exploring the possibility of doing the same. The first step maybe, strengthening some of the centers that we have in Malaysia.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

Drug Addiction Rehabilitation Center (DARC) in Japan as a model to treat people with drug addiction problem.

19th Family Medicine Specialist Association of Malaysia conference 2016.

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Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)