

Illegal sex stimulants openly sold on shopping platforms

PETALING JAYA: Premature ejaculation can happen to men of all age groups and 60-year-old Andy (not his real name), often finds it a challenge to be intimate with his partner.

Recently, Andy's friend from Sarawak, handed him a small bottle of "gambir Sarawak", which is a natural astringent that he claimed could aid in premature ejaculation.

"Place a few drops on the penis and soak it in water. It has a numbing effect and it is better than toothpaste," he said.

However, Andy said he stopped using the product after he began to be increasingly reliant on it.

"I was afraid that it could lead to long-term health problems

because I don't even know what its ingredients are," he added.

An online seller, which has a 4.8 out of five stars rating, was peddling a 2ml bottle of "gambir emas Sarawak" for RM10, without displaying the mandatory National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agency (NPRA) registration number.

Checks on several popular online shopping sites showed many illegal aphrodisiac products, among them purported "pleasure capsules" selling at RM69 for a strip of five pills, with claims that they can increase one's libido.

According to the seller, who has a high 97% rating, the delivery of the capsules takes up to three days and a 50% discount was

offered to encourage those interested in buying many at once.

There was no mention of the ingredients inside the capsules and a NPRA registration number was not displayed.

The Health Ministry requires online medicine sellers to display NPRA codes alongside their products.

Sex stimulants were also sold in a "premixed drink" form for RM149, where users are advised to consume the solution an hour before being intimate with their partners. It claimed that it could enhance one's libido after consumption.

Further checks also showed many sellers peddling an alleged leech and mudskipper oil (min-

yak lintah dan belacak asli) that is sold for as cheap as RM13 for a 30ml bottle.

According to reports, leech oil is a traditional concoction made with buffalo leeches from swamps and rivers.

The belief is that the leech's flexibility and ability to lengthen itself substantially will be imparted to the male sex organ if the oil is regularly rubbed onto it.

The mudskipper is also reported to be used in traditional medicine where its flesh is attributed for its aphrodisiac properties.

Prof Dr Sharifa Ezat Wan Puteh of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia said illegal sex stimulant products often contained tadalafil and sildenafil, which are pre-

scription medicines used to treat erectile dysfunction.

"It can potentially cause serious adverse effects such as decreased or loss of vision and hearing, strokes, heart attacks and priapism, which is painful and exceedingly long erection.

"If priapism is not treated immediately, it may lead to permanent impotence," she said.

Dr Sharifa said sildenafil and tadalafil are not suitable for patients with existing medical conditions such as heart-related issues or those who are on heart medication.

"Deaths of patients found to be using sildenafil while on nitrates have been reported overseas," she said.