

15 May 2026
MAPEL Lab
14:30 to 16:30 hrs

ACCESS TO *Cancer* DRUGS IN MALAYSIA

GUEST SPEAKERS

**Dr. Murallitharan
Munisamy**
Managing Director
National Cancer Society
Malaysia



Ms. Karina Yong
Senior Researcher
Third World Network



HEALTH KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY (HKS)

THEME II: POPULATION, SOCIETY HEALTH AND ILLNESS
Med1100/1200 - Semester 1

DR. MURALLITHARAN MUNISAMY

Dr. Murallitharan Munisamy is a Malaysian Public Health Physician with extensive educational and professional experience across the globe. He completed his medical training in the Russian Federation under a Malaysian government scholarship, followed by a Masters in Community Health Sciences at the National University of Malaysia. Dr. Murallitharan earned his PhD in Public Health at Chulalongkorn University, Thailand, with a focus on public health systems and health economics. He was a Chevening Scholar and served as a Fellow in Health Policy at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the London School of Economics. Previously a journalist and an award-winning writer, he has also held significant roles in medical and clinical research, healthcare administration, and medical journalism in Malaysia. Dr. Murallitharan is deeply committed to providing healthcare services to marginalized communities through various organizations in Kuala Lumpur and is currently the Medical Director of the National Cancer Society of Malaysia. He is also an Adjunct Associate Professor at the School of Medical and Life Sciences, Sunway University

MS. KARINA YONG

Ms. Karina Yong is a senior researcher with Third World Network, where she specializes in the impact of investment and trade agreements on human rights and other laws and policies in developing and least developed countries. A primary area of her work concerns the realization of the right to health with an emphasis on equitable access to medicines and responsible business conduct. Karina was a lead author of the Malaysian Competition Commission's market review of the pharmaceutical sector which investigated the factors influencing the affordability and availability of medicines in the country. As part of her work, Karina also engages regularly at various UN agencies such as CEDAW, CESC, and OHCHR. Prior to joining Third World Network, Karina was a litigation lawyer specializing in defamation, constitutional, administrative and environmental law.

CONTENT OUTLINE

Dr. Murallitharan Munisamy

- The most common cancers in Malaysia.
- The ratio of oncologist to patients in Malaysia.
- The link between survival rates, late diagnosis, and access to medication.
- Malaysia's National Cancer Control Plan – gaps and analysis.
- Dilemmas - E.g., public hospitals typically offer only the most basic cancer treatments, as newer or more expensive treatments like targeted therapies and immunotherapies are not reimbursed by the government. Private facilities are better equipped with shorter waiting lists, but they are expensive and unaffordable to many.

Ms. Karina Yong

- Available cancer drugs in the public sector and private sector – (types of treatment and differences in cost)
- Public sector - examples of how generics/biosimilars bring about a reduction in price: (imatinib and trastuzumab examples)
- Issues related to the entry of generics/biosimilars (lax patenting standards, secondary patents, patent thickets, patent evergreening, data exclusivity/trade secrets, patent linkage)
- Compulsory licensing and challenges that TWN with Together Against Cancer is exploring.
- High Costs of biologics and unavailability. Regulatory barriers to affordability and accessibility of biosimilars. Revamping of guidelines at the WHO and in the UK for the approval of biosimilars: removal of the requirement for non-clinical animal studies (only in rare scenarios) and PK and/or PD studies may be sufficient for confirming biosimilarity and additional clinical studies may not be required (reduction of cost by 70%).

