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FACULTY OF MEDICINE & HEALTH SCIENCES

ATRIA

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MEDICAL FMHS

Little Lives Big Care

Physical & Infectious Illness

Learning & Development Conditions

Parenting & Everyday Care

Community & Support

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FACULTY PROFILE

UNIMAS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK
FACULTY OF MEDICINE & HEALTH SCIENCES

Vision

A Global Leader in Medicine and Health Sciences Education.

Mission

To enhance the health and well-being of the global community through the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, and strategic collaboration.

FOREWORD

Dear readers,

It is a great pleasure to see the fourth issue of ATRIA. Each edition of ATRIA has sought to highlight topics that matter deeply to our community, and this issue is no exception. In this edition, we turn our attention to those who represent our future our children.

The theme, *"Little Lives, Big Care"*, reminds us that the health and well-being of children require more than medical treatment alone. It calls for a collective commitment from families, healthcare professionals, educators, and communities to ensure that every child has the opportunity to grow, learn, and thrive.

Within these pages, readers will find a diverse collection of articles covering childhood illnesses, learning and developmental issues, parenting and caregiving, as well as the importance of early screening and timely intervention. Together, these topics highlight the many dimensions of child health and the vital role that prevention, awareness, and compassionate care play in shaping healthier futures.

At the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, we remain committed to advancing health through education, research, and community engagement. By fostering greater understanding of children's health needs, we hope to contribute towards a society where every child receives the care and support they deserve.

I extend my sincere appreciation to the editorial team and all contributors for their dedication in producing this issue of ATRIA. I hope this edition informs, inspires, and reminds us of the profound responsibility we share in caring for the youngest members of our society. For in every child we nurture today lies the promise of a healthier and brighter tomorrow.

Happy reading.

Prof. Dr. Asri bin Said
Dean

Dear Readers,

This issue brings **Little Lives, Big Care** into focus, reminding us how thoughtful care can make a lasting difference in a child's life. Caring for children is not merely about treating illness; it is about nurturing growth, protecting potential, and shaping healthier futures.

There is a well-known saying, ***"It takes a whole village to raise a child."*** In medicine, that village extends far beyond the clinic walls. It includes families, communities, educators, nurses, doctors, allied health professionals, policymakers, and advocates; each playing a vital role in supporting a child's wellbeing. When this village stands united, care becomes comprehensive, compassionate, and sustainable.

This issue not only explores clinical insights and innovations, but also highlights parent sharing; powerful narratives that remind us of lived experiences, resilience, and the value of partnership in care.

As you read through this issue, we hope it gently reminds you that every role matters, and that your care, compassion, and commitment can make a meaningful difference in a child's life.

Together, let us continue offering big care to the little lives who trust us most.

Amelia Mohamad
Chief Editor

WILL ANAESTHESIA MAKE MY CHILD SLOW & FORGETFUL?

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Johnny Kiu Toh Sing
Consultant Anaesthesiologist

WHY DOES SOME PARENTS WORRY ABOUT ANAESTHESIA AFFECTING THEIR CHILD'S BRAIN?

Some parents fear anaesthesia will make their child slower at learning or more forgetful later in life. This concern arises because early childhood is a particularly important stage for brain development. During the first few years of life, the brain rapidly establishes new connections between nerve cells that are important for memory, learning, and behaviour. Because anaesthetic drugs act on the brain to produce sleep and control pain, research has investigated whether they might influence this newly developing brain.

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WHAT DOES RESEARCH IN CHILDREN SHOW?

Large human studies have, for the most part, been reassuring. Research such as the GAS, PANDA, and MASK studies found that individuals exposed for a single short period to general anaesthesia in early childhood did not significantly differ from children who were not exposed to general anaesthesia. The studies found similar measures in children, including IQ, memory, and learning ability, that were consistent over several years of follow-up.

Some studies, however, also indicate that repeated or prolonged exposure to anaesthesia, especially before the age of 3 years, may be associated with small differences in learning ability or behaviour. It is worth noting that these results are not conclusive. Children who require multiple surgical procedures often have underlying medical conditions that can also affect development.

WHAT SHOULD PARENTS KNOW?

Current medical advice stresses that necessary surgery should not be delayed due to fear of anaesthesia. Untreated medical problems have the potential to pose even greater risks to a child's health and development. Anaesthesiologists meticulously choose medicines and techniques to limit exposure and guarantee safety. Procedures may be combined whenever possible to reduce repeated anaesthetic exposure. Taken in the aggregate, current evidence suggests that modern anaesthesia, when used appropriately, is safe and does not generally make a child slow or forgetful. Continued studies address long-term outcomes and enhance the safety of children's anaesthetic care.

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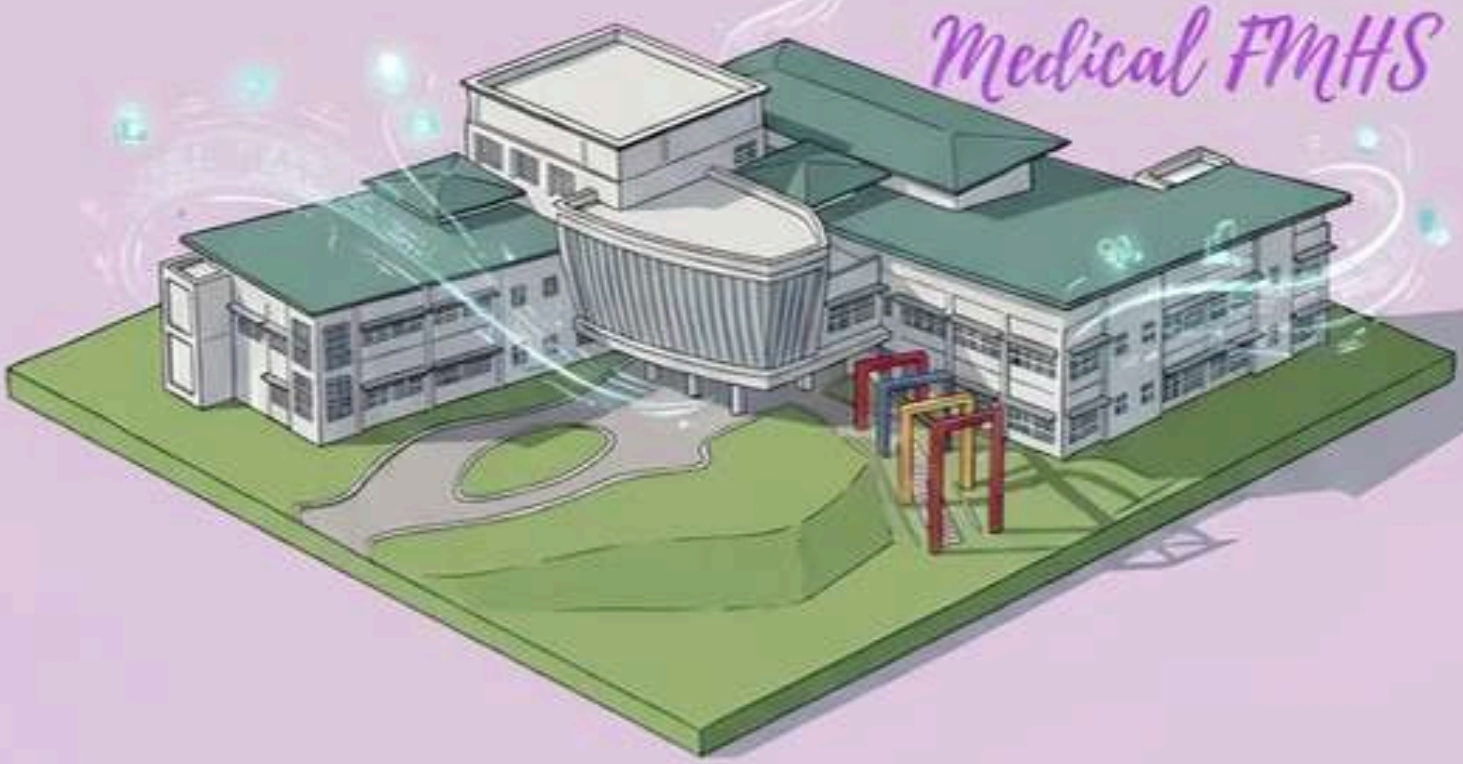

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