



COVID-19

and Its Impact on the People of Malaysia

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The Impact of COVID 19 on Health Communication in Malaysia

Vimala Govindaraju

INTRODUCTION

In January 2020, Malaysia encountered first COVID-19 and the crisis has been going on for almost two years now. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic on 11 March 2020. Today, COVID-19 is being treated with caution as an “endemic” and the economy is slowly accelerating given the decline in numbers since August 2021. Communication that understands the audience and the driving forces behind their actions, as well as understandable, reliable, accessible, relevant, actionable and timely communication, impresses people with attitudes and actions. Health communication can facilitate the path of uncertainty and fear with realistic and well-thought-out strategies to promote and overcome people’s fears and encourage them to face crisis situations. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, social restrictions and fears of health have changed behaviour and communication.

During the pandemic, government and health authorities recommended or ordered infection prevention and control measures such as social distance, face masks, travel restrictions, self-quarantine, quarantine, blockade, and vaccination. Health communication is clearly defined as a communication practice to promote healthy behaviour that saves the country and the general public from illness and pollution (Bulunmaz, 2019). It aims to empower and support the general public by providing important health information and reducing health