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# Easing park-goers' discomfort

Company to place picnic benches in parks for people with weak legs to rest

A PHARMACEUTICAL company's call for those with runner's knee and hip pain to exercise more has resulted in the sponsoring of eight picnic benches to be placed at recreational parks around Klang Valley.

It is hoped the presence of more park benches will encourage those dealing with the discomfort to lead a more active and richer life.

"We were looking at a specific target market who needs places to rest after their morning walks and *tai chi* sessions.

"From our observation, we noticed that many of them brought foldable stools when visiting parks.

"So we thought why not give them benches?" said Meda Pharma Malaysia country manager Shaun

Lau.

Many osteoarthritis patients are home-bound by choice, primarily because many public places do not have enough facilities for them to rest their soreness away.

Lau hopes the bench initiative will change the current scenario.

The benefits of exercise cannot be stressed enough, said Selayang Hospital consultant rheumatologist Dr Habibah Mohamed Yusof.

Low-impact exercises to prevent loss of muscle tone and strength is one of the crucial aspects in managing the disease.

Dr Habibah added that overweight patients needed to consider lifestyle modifications to reduce pressure on affected joints.

Putrajaya Floria and the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) are two of Meda's bench beneficiaries.

FRIM is also responsible for the manufacturing of the benches, made of heavy hardwood such as *merbau* and *tembusu*.

FRIM head of corporate communication Norhayati Nordin said the benches were made at the institute's factory using wood from fallen trees in the forest reserve.

Case in point was the use of wood from a 100-year-old *tembusu* tree which had been struck by lightning.

Meda has placed two benches at the FRIM visitor's centre, four at Anjung Floria and two in Shah Alam National Botanical Garden.



(Clockwise from left) Dr Habibah, Meda Pharma product manager Fong Chieu Yen, Putrajaya Floria general manager Zarilla Bashir, Norhayati and Lau sitting on one of the picnic benches sponsored by Meda Pharma.