Still no effective treatment for virus: Experts

There is still no good treatment for Covid-19, said infectious diseases experts from the two public institutions that have cared for the largest number of infected patients here.

Professor Dale Fisher, who chairs infection control at the National University Hospital (NUH), said that "you have to read between the lines" of all the stories circulating of treatment discoveries.

He said "people are so desperate to find a treatment" that when something works on a handful of patients, they claim to have found a treatment.

Professor Leo Yee Sin, who heads the National Centre for Infectious Diseases (NCID), said: "It is quite clear that we have not been able to find any anti-virus that shows efficacy in clinical treatment."

She said there is a lot of talk about a new drug, Remdesivir, but added: "We are still sitting tight, waiting for the verdict to be out. And we do not know at this point in time whether or not it will cause any significant treatment benefit."

Meanwhile, NCID doctors are looking into many ways of treating the patients, such as "using immune therapies or using other forms such as convalescent plasma to be able to complement supportive treatment in our patients".

Prof Fisher said that because of the lack of an effective treatment, it is important to try to keep the number of people infected as low as possible. There are now more than 3,500 Covid-19 patients in hospitals around the country.

His greatest wish today: "I would love a tablet that we could drop in all the unaffected dorm workers now so as to prevent them getting it."

"But, you know, every day we are going to learn of new evidence, but the game-changing standard of the evidence is still a way off."

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Salma Khalik