

## **Looking Beyond Musculoskeletal Issues – The Queen Elizabeth Hospital Experience**

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Thalassemia is the most common genetic disorder of haemoglobin synthesis. Sabah has the largest number of blood transfusion dependant beta thalassemia major patients in Malaysia. The National Screening program has started since 2008 to create awareness among the population, to increase acceptance of screening (adolescent, premarital, antenatal and extended family members of index case) and in the long term, to reduce the prevalence of the birth of blood transfusion dependent cases.

Another important aspect of the screening program would be to end the stigma among thalassemia carriers, to have future discussions with all stake-holders with recommendation of athletes identified as thalassemia carrier to be the role model for the youth, and to demonstrate that it is not a hindrance to be an athlete or be active in sports and lead a healthy lifestyle.