

Removing stagnant water most desired social norm: Survey

✓ **CHERYL TAN**

Removing stagnant water to prevent mosquitoes from breeding is regarded as the most desired social norm by Singaporeans, followed by refraining from spitting or littering.

A survey of 3,000 Singaporeans, carried out from August to December 2018, found 73 per cent rated stagnant water removal as a very important social norm, followed by 72.6 per cent for not spitting or littering in public.

The results of the survey were released last Friday by Associate Professor Leong Chan-Hoong, who is now with the Singapore University of Social Sciences.

The study was commissioned by the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth as part of SG Cares, a movement that aspires to build a more caring society in Singapore.

Prof Leong said the results, which took some time to analyse, remain relevant amid the Covid-19 pandemic and the resurgence in dengue, both of which highlight the importance of health and hygiene.

SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE

“People are still as cognisant that these civic norms are important, but I would expect more individuals to take active steps to encourage those around them to do the same, especially when the importance of such socially responsible behaviour comes to the forefront,” he said.

For instance, desirable norms such as refraining from spitting in public now bear much greater weight, as failing to do so could pose a health hazard to others.

This is especially so because the coronavirus that causes Covid-19 spreads through respiratory droplets.

Not surprisingly, removing stagnant water to prevent mosquito breeding was rated as the most desirable social norm because there was a sharp rise in dengue cases in 2018, with 3,285 cases reported.

As the number of dengue infections surges past 10,000 this year, Prof Leong noted that the concerns are just as valid today.

Other norms that were rated as very important in the survey included giving up seats on public transport (62.1 per cent), keeping common areas clean (53.3 per cent) and getting along well with neighbours (48.7 per cent).

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