

- Virus

Air purifier necklaces useless in fight vs Covid-19, says DOH

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If you are thinking of wearing an air purifier necklace, better think again. Earlier, it was reported that the province of Cebu will require all public utility vehicle drivers and conductors to wear personal air purifiers. But can these necklaces really protect them against Covid-19?

“There’s no evidence,” said Health undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire.

Although it will cause no harm, Vergeire stressed that the DOH is not recommending the use of such a device.

“Sinabi na po natin dati ‘yan, na wala po ‘yang ebidensya. Bagamat hindi po ito nakaka-cause ng harm sa isang tao, pero hindi rin po siya nakakapagbigay ng proteksyon laban sa Covid-19 [We have already said it before that there is no evidence to support that. Although it may cause no harm, it will not also give you the protection you need against Covid-19],” she said.

In October 2020, the DOH clarified that it does not endorse the use of air purifier necklaces which claim to kill viruses or bacteria and protect wearers from contracting the disease.

Not recommended

SHE noted that under the Philippine Covid-19 Living Clinical Practice Guidelines, the use of ionizing air purifiers against Covid-19 is “not recommended.”

The Covid-19 Action Network (CAN) echoed what Vergeire said as they expressed concern over Cebu provincial government’s policy mandating all PUV drivers and conductors to wear personal air purifiers.

“We also criticize the provincial government for encouraging government employees to purchase these air purifiers and issuing a memorandum which requires workers to wear air purifiers at all times,” the group said.

They stressed that there is still a lack of solid evidence to support the personal air purifiers’ efficacy in preventing Covid-19.

The group said that there are other ways to improve ventilation such as opening windows in vehicles which is less costly and, more importantly, have been proven to reduce Covid-19 transmission.

“While we believe in supportive health measures, especially given the spread of the Delta variant, these policies must be data-driven and backed by science,” the group stressed.