

# Progressive Pulmonary Fibrosis in Malaysia



## Syazatul Syakirin Sirol Aflah

**Organization** Institut Perubatan Respiratori  
**Current Position** Consultant Respiratory Physician, Doctor

### Educational background

1998-2003 M.D., Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
2010 Membership, Royal College of Physician, UK  
2017 Fellowship of Respiratory, Malaysia

### Professional experience

2017-Present Consultant Respiratory Physician In Institut Perubatan Respiratori  
2023-Present KPJ Tawakkal Hospital, Private Practice

Progressive pulmonary fibrosis (PPF) is not widely recognised in Malaysia although this is a devastating condition that leads to respiratory decline, impaired quality of life, and premature mortality. Despite advances in international guidelines, awareness and early diagnosis remain limited locally. Many patients present late, with advanced disease that is less responsive to therapy. Contributing factors include lack of structured ILD registries, limited expertise in district hospitals, underutilisation of multidisciplinary discussions, and delayed referral to respiratory specialists.

Although antifibrotic therapy has transformed outcomes for patients with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis and other progressive fibrosing ILDs, access in Malaysia is severely restricted by high costs and limited allocation in public healthcare. Consequently, many eligible patients remain untreated, relying only on supportive care. This inequity highlights a major gap between evidence-based recommendations and real-world practice.

Efforts must focus on two parallel strategies: (1) improving diagnosis through training, standardised referral pathways, and awareness programmes to ensure earlier identification of PPF and (2) advocating for sustainable funding models to support wider access to antifibrotics. Partnerships between government, professional societies, and industry are needed to explore subsidy schemes, inclusion in national formularies, and patient assistance programmes. This combined approach is essential to reduce morbidity and mortality in Malaysian PPF patients.