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HIV cases down since programme introduced

KOTA BARU: The number of HIV cases in the country has drastically dropped since the Injection Tools and Needle exchange programme and the Methadone Replacement Therapy programme were introduced in 2006, said Executive Director of the Malaysian Aids Council, Dr Ilias Adam Yee.

He added that last year, the rate of HIV infections was 11.69 per 100,000 people compared to 21.88 per 100,000 in 2006.

“When we introduced the programme, the number of new HIV cases dropped drastically since the highest number of HIV transmissions was through the sharing of injection tools and needles,” Dr Ilias Adam told reporters after attending a briefing in conjunction with the Harm Reduction International Media Field Trip, here, Thursday.

Dr Ilias Adam said among the main objectives of the programme was to reduce the

spread of HIV infections and other diseases spread through the blood such as hepatitis in Malaysia.

“When we distribute the needles, we interact with the clients and build a rapport with them so that they can come back to seek treatment,” he said.

“MAC has distributed 5,153,578 needles to 83,608 clients registered with the association,” he said.