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# More AIDS infections via sexual transmission

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SEXUAL transmission is now the highest cause of AIDS infections in the country, taking over the number one spot from infection via injection.

This latest trend has sparked worry among the AIDS support community that the epidemic could spread to the general community.

Kuala Lumpur AIDS Support Services (KLASS) president Dr Christopher Lee said although the number of new AIDS patients had been decreasing annually, sexual transmission had taken over infection via injection as the main source of AIDS infection in Malaysia for the past two years.

"AIDS in Malaysia used to be a focal, concentrated epidemic concerning only a certain section of the society. But with the new trend, we are worried this can spread to the masses," he said after the launch of

Red Ribbon@Brickfields, an AIDS awareness programme organised by KLASS in Brickfields, yesterday.

The day-long programme involved some 100 student volunteers from MAHSA University College and Perdana University.

Dr Lee also said discrimination towards AIDS patients was still a "very real problem" in Malaysia currently.

"The treatment for AIDS patients have improved drastically but discrimination remains a problem. This is especially prevalent in the medical fraternity," he said.

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## Future bright for AIDS patients

However, he believed that the future is brighter for AIDS patients, going by the evidence of participation from future doctors.

"At this age, these students are already coming out and

volunteering in increasing awareness. So, the future is brighter than it was during our generation," he said.

Also present yesterday were Mahsa's Dean of Medical Faculty, Datuk Dr Khairul Anuar Abdullah and Sungai Buloh Hospital director, Dr Khalid Ibrahim.

Dr Khalid said the campaign's battle is "with AIDS, not people who have AIDS".

There are reportedly about 93,000 AIDS patients in Malaysia with around 3,000 new cases reported annually.

The event, organised with the participation of the Sungai Buloh Hospital and also the Medicine Faculty in Mahsa, was also attended by THR Raaga DJs Anantha and Uthaya to provide entertainment to participants.

The event was held in conjunction with the World AIDS Memorial Day 2012 yesterday.



**RAISING AWARENESS:** Volunteers, with placards, sending out strong messages in support of AIDS community at the launch, yesterday —Pic: ASHRAF SHAMSUL AZLAN