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# 'Drugs raise sex drive, HIV cases'

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SHARING of needles among addicts is the main cause of HIV infection in this country.

However, what is least known is addicts who take amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) such as syabu, ice and ecstasy pills are also indirectly exposing themselves to the deadly virus which causes AIDS (Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome).

State Women, Family, Community Development and Health Committee chairman Dr Robia Kosai told the assembly yesterday that ATS drugs not only stimulated addicts, but also boosted their sex drive.

"This leads to casual sex and increases the risk of HIV infection."

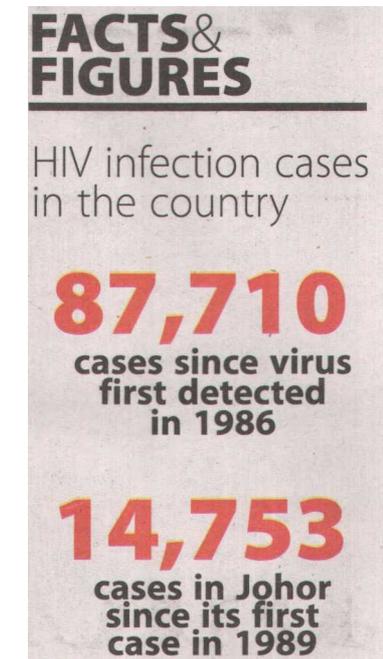
Dr Robia, who was replying to Chia Song Cheng (BN-Pengkalan Rinting), said there was a declining trend of HIV-infected addicts compared with

those who got infected via sexual intercourse.

In 2000, 77 per cent of those infected with HIV were drug-related, 19.7 per cent were through heterosexual intercourse and 0.7 per cent through homosexual activities.

Last year, drug related HIV cases dropped to 56 per cent, but HIV-heterosexual and homosexual activities rose to 24 per cent and 3.4 per cent respectively.

Dr Robia added the chances of HIV infection because of sexual activities were also high among those who suffered from sexually transmitted dis-



eases such as syphilis, genital herpes, chlamydia and gonorrhoea.

A total of 87,710 HIV infection cases were recorded since the virus was first detected in the country in 1986.

Johor recorded its first case in 1989 and thus far, had recorded 14,753 cases of infection; 2,038 cases of deterioration to AIDS and 1,407 deaths.

Earlier, several heated exchanges took place when Rasman Ithnain (BN-Sedili) reproached state opposition leader Dr Boo Cheng Hau (DAP-Skudai) for not getting his facts right when he criticised the performance of civil servants.