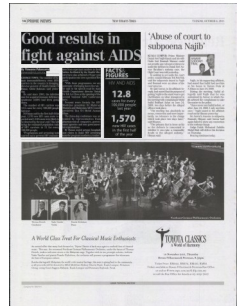


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Good results in fight against AIDS

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GEORGE TOWN: The number of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) carriers in the country is dropping, director-general of Health Datuk Dr Hasan Abdul Rahman said yesterday.

He said since 2003, the infection rate for acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) had been going down.

The number of HIV carriers was 12.8 cases for every 100,000 people last year.

Dr Hasan said in the first half of this year, 1,570 new HIV cases were reported and 3,140 cases were likely to be detected by the year-end. This will bring the estimated population ratio of HIV carriers to 11 for every 100,000 people.

"Programmes and screening tests carried out to prevent HIV transmis-

sion from expectant mothers to their babies facilitated by the Health Ministry have also achieved a 95 per cent participation rate over a period of five years.

"With these programmes, we are optimistic of bringing down the rate," he said in his speech read by state Health Department director Datuk Dr Teh Lei Choo at the opening of the second National AIDS Conference here.

Present were Society for HIV Medicine president Dr Mahiran Mustafa and Malaysian AIDS Council president Tan Sri Mohd Zaman Khan.

The three-day conference was attended by representatives from pharmaceutical companies, government agencies and non-governmental organisations.

Dr Hasan urged private hospitals and clinics to make HIV screening tests for pregnant mothers a routine.

FACTS & FIGURES

HIV AND AIDS

12.8

cases for every 100,000 people last year

1,570

new HIV cases in the first half of the year