

Headline	2,000 get HIV in India		
MediaTitle	New Straits Times		
Date	02 Jun 2016	Color	Black/white
Section	World	Circulation	74,711
Page No	25	Readership	240,000
Language	English	ArticleSize	162 cm ²
Journalist	N/A	AdValue	RM 2,930
Frequency	Daily	PR Value	RM 8,790



2,000 get HIV in India

OVER 17 MONTHS:

They contract disease through blood transfusions

NEW DELHI

MORE than 2,000 Indians contracted HIV over a 17-month period after receiving blood transfusions, data from the national AIDS body showed yesterday.

In response to a Right to Information request filed by Mumbai-based activist Chetan Kothari, the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) said 2,234 people had been infected between October 2014 and March this year.

The reply, which was shared yesterday, was sent to Kothari last month after he asked for data for that particular time period.

"I wanted to know what the government is doing to ensure people have access to safe blood," Kothari said.

"The data shows blood is not being screened for HIV despite so

much awareness."

Access to safe blood is limited, especially in rural areas, because of a lack of proper screening devices, according to NACO's website.

The northern state of Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous, topped the list with 361 patients found infected with HIV due to contaminated blood in hospitals, followed by the western states of Gujarat and Maharashtra, with 292 and 276, respectively.

A total of 264 cases were recorded here. The government estimates that about 2.5 million Indians are living with HIV/AIDS out of a population of 1.25 billion.

A NACO official yesterday said the data collected was "not scientific" as it was based on subjective responses from patients and reflected less than one per cent of total HIV-positive

cases.

"There are several occasions when patients do not declare the exact reason or means of transmission because of societal pressure or even lack of awareness and sometimes ignorance," the *Times of India* newspaper quoted the unnamed official as saying.

"Therefore, the data cannot be considered 100 per cent accurate."

In a posting on its website, NACO, which falls under the Health Ministry, said the government was in the process of improving blood safety screenings and introducing technology to ensure zero HIV transmission.

Under Indian law, hospitals must screen donors and their donated blood for any kind of infections, including HIV, Hepatitis B and C, as well as malaria. **AFP**