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High number of women getting HIV through husbands, says Rohani

KUALA LUMPUR: More than 90,000 Malaysians live with HIV, with a significant number of women becoming infected through their male partners, said Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Rohani Abdul Karim.

She said evidence showed that women were being infected with HIV from being intimate with their husbands.

"In 2010, three out of five cases of women living with HIV were married women," she said at the opening of the Asean Regional Workshop on Preventing Intimate Partner Transmission of HIV here yesterday.

Citing a United Nations Development Programme study last year, Rohani said sexual transmission was the top cause of adults getting infected.

"Consequently, a significant number of women become infected as a result of their intimate relationships with men who are, or

once were, engaged in high-risk behaviours." She said it was estimated that only 40 per cent of those infected with HIV in Malaysia were receiving treatment, adding that the rest should come forward to receive anti-retroviral treatment (ART).

"Globally, 16 million out of 38 million people living with HIV have access to treatment. So, the rest should come forward. People with HIV used to be stigmatised.

"The ministry has consistently urged people to frequently test themselves for HIV.

"Just because a person has tested positive doesn't mean they should give up on life. They should instead seek ART," she said.

According to the Global AIDS Response Progress Report Malaysia 2015, as of December 2014, the number of people living with HIV in the country was 88,093, with the total reported AIDS-related deaths being 17,096.

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