

Headline	Number of sarawak women having HIV rising	Language	English
Date	03 Dec 2009	Page No	1
MediaTitle	Eastern Times	Article Size	124 cm²
Section	News	Color	One Spot Color
Journalist	N/A	ADValue	446
Frequency	Daily	PRValue	1,337
Circ / Read	46,471 / 164,773		



Number of Sarawak women having HIV rising

KUCHING: The number of women infected with HIV in Sarawak is rising, says Minister of Environment and Public Health, Dato Sri Wong Soon Koh.

He said that in just 10 years the number had jumped from 23% of reported cases in 1998 to 32% in 2008. More than half of the cases were housewives who got it from their husbands, although there were other isolated cases.

"It is sad to note that most of the victims only realised that they were infected with the virus during the final stage of the disease," Wong said when opening the State-level World Aids Day at the Islamic Information Centre in Jalan Upland yesterday.

As such, he suggested that steps must be taken to educate women on ways to protect themselves. "We need more volunteers and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to spread the message around on prevention and protection."

According to Wong, Sarawak was not spared from the AIDS scourge. Based on statistics, Sarawak reported 1,056 HIV cases, 568 AIDS, and 224 deaths in the period from 1989 to October this year. The most vulnerable group was young adults aged between 20 and 39 years, who made up 65% of the total number of HIV cases.

In Sarawak, it had been identified that transmission was mostly through heterosexual activities, he added.

"At one time people thought that only foreigners

Headline	Number of sarawak women having HIV rising	Language	English
Date	03 Dec 2009	Page No	1
MediaTitle	Eastern Times	Article Size	124 cm²
Section	News	Color	One Spot Color
Journalist	N/A	ADValue	446
Frequency	Daily	PRValue	1,337
Circ / Read	46,471 / 164,773		

who came to Sarawak were infected. However the number of HIV cases among locals has increased."

"Statistics show that out of the 137 new HIV cases reported in 2008, 117 cases (or 85%) involved local people," he said.

Some 86,127 Malaysians have been infected with the HIV virus since 1986, and by end of June this year, 14,955

of them have been confirmed HIV-positive, and 11,549 have since died.

The trend shows an increase to two females for every eight males infected with HIV in 2008 compared to one female for every 13 males in 2000.

Transmission through heterosexual activities increased from 18% in 2000 to 27% in 2008, he said.