

Headline **Minister issues caution over rising HIV cases**
Date **04 Dec 2009**
MediaTitle **Borneo Post**
Section **Home**
Journalist **N/A**
Frequency **Daily (EM)**
Circ / Read **57,529 / 166,173**

Language **English**
Page No **15**
Article Size **132 cm²**
Color **Black/white**
ADValue **760**
PRValue **2,280**



Minister issues caution over rising HIV cases

PENANG: Health Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai yesterday issued a caution over the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), saying more women were found to be among the HIV cases reported over the past few years.

Malaysia experienced a gradual 'feminisation' of the HIV epidemic, with an increasing number of newly reported HIV infections being transmitted by the sexual route, he said.

The reported HIV cases through sexual transmission rose from 18.9 per cent in 2000 to 29.8 per cent in 2008 while the cases among women increased from 9.4 per cent to 19.1 per cent over the same period, he said in his speech

The number was equivalent to a notification rate of 28.5 HIV cases per 100,000 population but the rate has dropped to 13.3 per 100,000 population by 2008.

Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai, Health Minister

opening the Malaysian National Conference on HIV/AIDS in conjunction with World AIDS Day 2009, here.

He said the number of HIV cases reported reached its peak in 2002 with 6,978 new cases.

"The number was equivalent to a notification rate of 28.5 HIV cases per 100,000 population but the rate has dropped to 13.3 per 100,000 population by 2008," he said.

He said surveillance data for January to September this year indicated that the rate might fall further, to 11 per 100,000 population in 2009.

"The drop is in line with our target for the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of halting and reversing the spread of HIV by the year 2015," he said.

Liow also said that the ministry was encouraging couples to take a pre-

marital HIV test before getting married to reduce the incidence of HIV infection, especially in women.

"Currently, all Muslim couples have to undergo a mandatory screening for HIV before they get married but I hope all couples would take the pre-marital HIV test voluntarily," he said.

Meanwhile, social advocate Datuk Paduka Marina Mahathir said the mandatory HIV screening for couples should be done away with.

"We should educate and encourage couples, especially the female partners, to go voluntarily for the test and not by force," she said. — Bernama