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HIV, drug abuse can affect productivity

Neil Chan

KOTA KINABALU: HIV and drug abuse can affect the motivation of workers leading to decline in the productivity of a company, according to Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) Director General Dato Dr Johari bin Basri.

He said this during the launching of the "code of practice on prevention and eradication of drugs, alcohol and substance abuse in the workplace and code of practice on prevention and management of HIV/AIDS at the workplace" programme by DOSH Sabah and Labuan in conjunction with Novotel Hotel, Wednesday.

Dr Johari said if HIV and drug abuse are not opposed effectively as a whole it will become difficult to be contained.

"In line with the Government's vision to make Malaysia a drug-free nation by 2015 and to have a different approach to the problem of HIV/AIDS in the country, DOSH had created a code of practice on the prevention and management of HIV/AIDS in 2001 and the code of practice for prevention and eradication of drugs and alcohol in the workplace in 2005.

"According to the Malaysian Health Ministry statistics as of December 2009, after more than 20 years of the HIV epidemic in Malaysia, there are 87,710 people who have been infected with HIV.

"From this 90.8pc are men and 9.2pc are women. Additionally there are 13,394 cases of AIDS death as of December 2009.

"From 2002, the number of new HIV cases reported has decreased year by year until the end of 2009. In Malaysia today, there are nine new cases of HIV each day. It is projected that the number of Malaysians infected with HIV will

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increase to 120,000 sufferers by 2015.

He said more than 70pc of HIV cases reported were through drug abuse using shared needles.

"The issue that needs to be highlighted is that more than 80pc of these HIV sufferers are from the working class.

Dr Johari said that as of December 2008, 10,860 or more than 85pc of drug addicts in Malaysia are those between 20 and 49 years.

"This is the age of productive workers. Hence it is important that we prevent this (drug addiction) from happening and to have a system to handle workers who are currently already drug addicts."

He said that according to statistics released by the National Statistics Department, as many as 9,813 people or close to 80 per cent of drug addicts in Malaysia have jobs.

"So you can see this will give a long term negative effect on the productivity of the country.

"As such, we hope that more employers can have this policy in their workplaces to stop the spread of this problem and to ensure that the health and welfare of their workers is maintained," he said.



Dr Johari (centre) and Jacques (left)