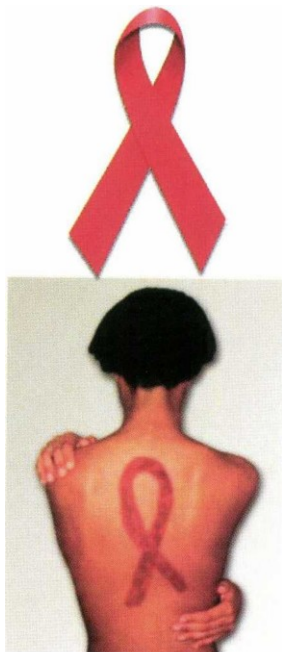


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HIV/AIDS ON THE RISE AMONG WOMEN

The number of women living with HIV/AIDS in Malaysia has dramatically increased. Malaysian AIDS Foundation president Datuk Dr. Raj Karim said Health Ministry statistics revealed that of the 94,841 cases reported between 1986 and December last year, 9,494 were women. "The steep increase could be attributed to infection through unprotected sex with their spouses. Most women face a greater risk of infection because their husbands or partners had taken drugs or contracted a sexually-transmitted disease," she told a press conference after launching a business management programme for women in collaboration with the Women, Family and Community Development Ministry. Kelantan, she added, also had the highest number of cases of people living with HIV/AIDS. "The figures have not changed much since a decade ago and this could be due to many factors, including its geographical location near the Thai border." - The Star