

Headline	Need to hasten integration of HIV programmes		
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Need to hasten integration of HIV programmes

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia needs to speed up the integration of its various health programmes in a bid to ensure the spread of HIV can be addressed more effectively.

Sungai Buloh Hospital senior consultant and infectious disease physician Datuk Dr Christopher Lee noted that Malaysia already had programmes for HIV, tuberculosis, methadone replacement and ante-natal health.

“But, they are all stand-alone

programmes. I think there is need for us to speed up integration of these programmes,” he told reporters on the sidelines of the 7th International AIDS Society (IAS) Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention here.

Dr Lee said the integration of these health programmes would not only allow healthcare providers to trace the early stage of any HIV infection but also make it easier for patients to obtain treatment.

“This will make HIV treatment easier because patients can just go to one place to get all their treatment done.”

He said Malaysia could take a leaf from Cambodia’s experience as it had successfully reduced the number of its annual new cases from 20,000 in the 1990s to around 1,300 last year, through a public health sector-led integrated HIV intervention programmes. — Bernama