

Headline	Steady rise in HIV and AIDS cases in state, a cause for concern		
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# Steady rise in HIV and AIDS cases in state, a cause for concern

SIBU: There has been a gradual increase in HIV and AIDS cases in the state in recent years with 178 new cases recorded last year of which about 60 per cent were detected at the AIDS stage despite a drop in the overall figures in the country since 2002.

Sarawak recorded a total of 1,056 HIV and 568 AIDS cases from 1989 until October, 2009.

This was disclosed by director of Sibu Hospital, Dr Ngian Hie Ung at the launching of World AIDS Day 2013 at the hospital here yesterday morning.

"The figures are quite threatening because there is a very good possibility that the figures were under reported. There is a cause for concern as the theme for the World AIDS Day from 2011 to 2015 is, "Getting to zero: Zero new HIV infections. Zero discrimination. Zero AIDS-related death."

She explained that in Malaysia the cumulative number of reported HIV infection since 1986 was 94,841; cumulative numbers of reported AIDS in the same period was 17,686 and cumula-

tive number of reported death related to HIV/AIDS since then was 14,986.

"In 2011, the number of people in Malaysia reported with new HIV cases was 3,479 and the number of Malaysian living with HIV in the same year was 81,000.

"The incidence rate was 11.72 per 100,000 population in 2013 or 9.5 new cases per day.

"There were 904 deaths due to AIDS in 2010 or an average of 2.5 deaths per day.

"The key affected populations in Malaysia are Intervene Drug Users (IDU); Chinese as the main driver with 70-80 per cent of all reported cases in 1990s.

"Among them were female sex workers and transgender population for which race ranking in Peninsular Malaysia are Malay, Chinese and Indian whereas in Sarawak are Malay, Iban and Chinese (suspect under reporting).

"IDU reported cases started to decline in 2004 and reached 38.7 per cent in 2011 while sexual transmission of HIV saw an

increase. In Sarawak the main mode of transmission had always been sexual. Sex workers account for 0.6 per cent of the total case. Another high risk group is the MSM (men who have sex with men) which accounts for 2.5 per cent of total HIV cases.

"Among the transgender, a survey conducted in 2009 demonstrated that the prevalence of HIV among them is 9.7 per cent. Even though males continue to represent the majority (90 per cent) of cumulative HIV cases in Malaysia, there is an increasing portion of cases among women. However, HIV transmission occurred mainly through heterosexual transmission (87 per cent)," she said.

Among those present at the launch were the Organising Chairman of the World AIDS Day Dr Wong Toh Mee, Chairman of Psychiatric Board of Visitors and Mental Health Association, Cr So Teck Kee and a member of Sibu Hospital Board of Visitors, Penghulu Chua Hong Kee.

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**DR Ngian** (2nd right) assisted by Sister Florence Ho fixing a red ribbon to launch the HIV and AIDS awareness campaign, as by **Dr Wong Toh Mee** (2nd left), **Penghulu Chua Hong Kee** (left) and **Councillor So Teck Kee** (right) look on.