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Drop in HIV cases

KUALA LUMPUR: New HIV cases in Malaysia recorded a drop of more than 50 per cent in 11 years, from 6,978 cases in 2002 to 3,393 cases last year, said Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam.

He said new HIV infection among drug addicts, a group that previously recorded the highest rate of new infections, had also shown a drop.

"This is the outcome of the Reducing Harm programme (Injection tools and needle exchange programme and Methadone Replacement Therapy) being launched simultaneously by the ministry, Malaysian AIDS Council and affiliates in 2006.

"New HIV infection among drug addicts has since then decreased from 53 per cent in 2006 to only 22 per cent last year," he said in his speech at the 12th Malaysian Aids Council biannual meeting here yesterday.

However, he said, sexual transmission had contributed to over 74 per cent of new cases last year, a drastic rise compared with only 32 per cent, five years ago.

Those infected with HIV must be sincere and responsible in not spreading it to their partners, he said.