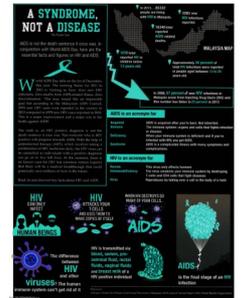


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A SYNDROME, NOT A DISEASE

By Susan Lau

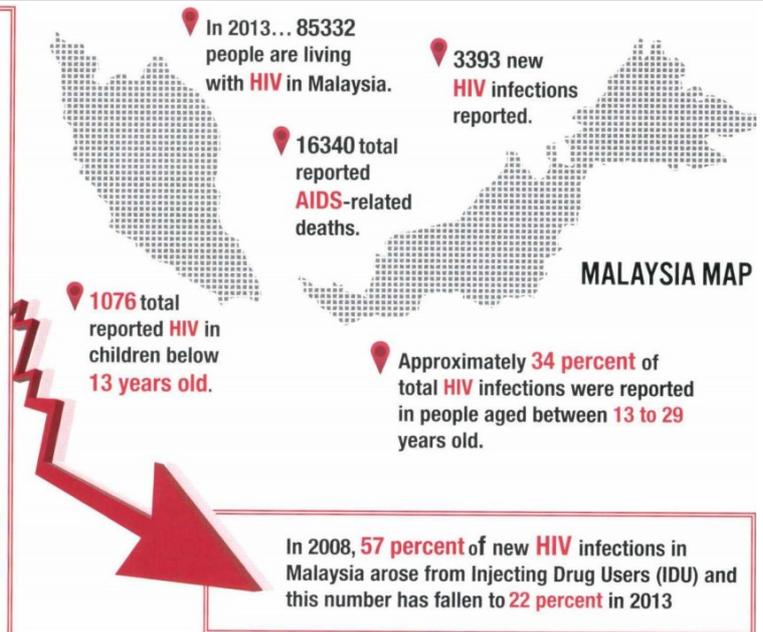
AIDS is not the death sentence it once was. In conjunction with World AIDS Day, here are the essential facts and figures on HIV and AIDS.



World AIDS Day falls on the 1st of December, this year. The running theme for 2011 to 2015 is 'Getting to Zero: Zero new HIV infections. Zero deaths from AIDS-related illness. Zero discrimination.' This may sound like an impossible goal but according to the Malaysian AIDS Council, 3393 new HIV cases were reported in the country in 2013 compared to 6978 new HIV cases reported in 2002. This is a major improvement and a major win in the battle against AIDS!

The truth is, an HIV positive diagnosis is not the death sentence it once was. Not everyone who is HIV positive will progress towards AIDS. With the help of antiretroviral therapy (ART), which involves taking a combination of HIV medicines daily, the HIV virus can be controlled so individuals with a positive diagnosis can go on to live full lives. At the moment, there is no known cure for HIV but scientists remain hopeful that there will be a medical breakthrough that could potentially save millions of lives in the future.

Read on and discover key facts about HIV and AIDS.

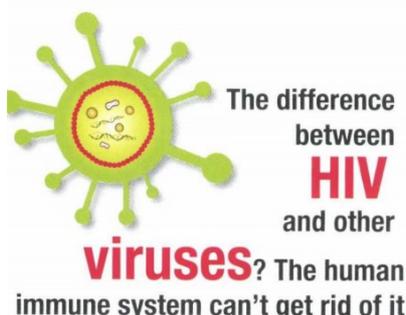
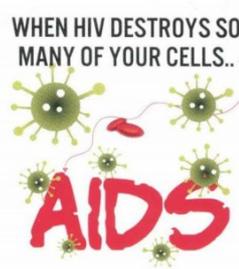
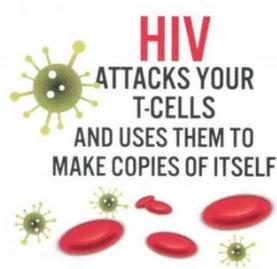


AIDS is an acronym for

- Acquired Immuno** AIDS is acquired after you're born. Not inherited. The immune system: organs and cells that fights infection or disease.
- Deficiency** When your immune system is deficient and if you're infected with HIV, you get AIDS.
- Syndrome** AIDS is a complicated illness with many symptoms and complications.

HIV is an acronym for

- Human Immunodeficiency** This virus only affects humans. The virus weakens your immune system by destroying T-cells and CD4 cells that fight diseases.
- Virus** Reproduces by taking over a cell in the body of a host.



HIV is transmitted via **blood, semen, pre-seminal fluid, rectal fluids, vaginal fluids and breast milk** of a HIV positive individual



References: Aids.gov; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Malaysian AIDS council Annual Report 2013; World Health Organization.