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AIDS Council to target men with extra sexual liaisons

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PETALING JAYA: The Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC) will now target male groups that engaged in sex outside their marriage or relationship.

MAC programme director Parimelazhagan Ellan said there is an increasing number of women being infected by their partners who engaged in sex outside their relationship and contracted the HIV.

"In the past, women were mainly infected by drug injecting partners, and we had carried out harm reduction programmes among drug users," he said.

This year, the council will target men engaged in sex outside their main relationship since work had begun for drug injecting people and vulnerable women groups, said Parimelazhagan when asked if men too need to be made responsible in containing the

spread of the HIV.

"We will work with the Health Ministry to see how we can tackle this growing trend."

Health Minister Datuk Liow Tiong Lai recently said the ministry had set up a task force to check the increasing rate of women being infected with HIV and had until April to come out with an action plan based on the World Health Organisation's recommendations.

The ministry's statistics from 1986 to June 2008 showed that 7,162 women were infected with HIV and 1,516 developed AIDS, and of the 2,565 housewives infected, 525 developed AIDS.

Sungai Buloh Hospital Infectious Diseases unit head Dr Christopher Lee said it was easier to target harm reduction work among injecting drug users than non-drug users. Dr Lee said housewives from the lower income group formed the vulnerable women's group, and blue collared male workers the main group of men infected.