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Sharp increase in HIV cases in Sarawak a cause for concern

MUKAH: The number of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) cases in the state is a concern, with a total of 1,525 detected until September.

Of the total, 937 were Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) patients and 331 deaths due to the syndrome.

Kenil Jeraie, a political secretary to the chief minister, said what was worrying was the number had increased at an alarming rate.

"In 2008, there were 137 cases. In 2009, the figures increased to 143, reduced marginally to 141 in

2010 and jumped to 169 cases last year. From January to September this year, 140 cases were reported,"

he said when launching the state-level World AIDS Day do here yesterday.

The number of HIV cases detected in the country since the first one in 1986 until December last year was 94,841.

Kenil pointed out that the spread of HIV in the state last year was mainly through sexual relationship – heterosexual accounted for 76% or 123 cases, and homosexual (14% or

23 cases) – while drug abuse contributed to 9% or 14 cases only.

With the slogan "Getting To Zero AIDS Related Death", this was the first time the state-level event was held here.

It was aimed at promoting awareness about how members of the society could play their respective role in fighting AIDS.

To add fun to the event, artistes such as Zehra Zambri, Norfazillah Mohd Shapiae and Data band member Sidi were on hand to entertain the crowd.