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# Malaysia on track to halt AIDS epidemic, says Subra

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia is on track in its efforts to stop the AIDS epidemic but must reduce the rising number of new HIV infections spread through sex.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam said Malaysia was on the verge of reaching its end-2015 target of 11 new infections per 100,000 population but it must do more to reduce sexual transmission of HIV.

"We are aware of this and I have asked my officers to come up with a solution," he said at an event for World AIDS Day 2014 yesterday.

His speech was read out by the ministry's disease control deputy director Dr Sha'ari Ngadiman.

Dr Subramaniam said that Malaysia had achieved two of the three goals set by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS) for 2011-2015.

The number of new HIV cases among inject-

ing drug users plunged from 66% in 2005 to 21.5% last year, while mother-to-child transmissions had been less than 2% since 1998, Dr Subramaniam said.

Last year, however, 80% of new HIV infections was through sex.

Of the sexual relationships, 83% involved heterosexuals and 17% homosexual men.

Up to September, there were 104,197 HIV infections, 21,111 AIDS cases and 16,918 related deaths reported, while the number of people living with HIV (PLHIV) was 87,279.

From January to September, 2,525 new HIV infections were reported and it was estimated that there would be 3,367 new cases by year-end, with the rate of new HIV infections standing at 11.2 per 100,000 population.

Of those newly infected by HIV, 70% were Malays, 15% Chinese, 8% Indian, 3% other races and 4% foreigners.

UNAIDS announced that if the world takes a swift approach in the next five years, the AIDS epidemic could be stopped by 2030.