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HIV / AIDS

Data from the Ministry of Health showed that by end of 1994 there were 3,393 cases of HIV, 105 cases of AIDS and 80 cases of AIDS death. In 1996, the Government announced that some 300 new HIV cases were reported each month, bringing the cumulative total of HIV and AIDS cases to about 16,349 and 448 respectively by middle of that year. The situation has gotten worse, such that by June 2006, the number of HIV cases recorded by the Ministry of Health had increased to 73,427 of which 11,413 had progressed to AIDS. Another 8,703 patients have died from the disease. The majority of HIV-infected individuals in Malaysia, nearly 79 per cent, were between the ages of 20 and 39, while some 1.4 per cent of those infected are aged 13 to 19. Men made up the bulk of new HIV cases, with only about 1 in every 10 new cases occurring among women.

Estimates by UNAIDS show that the number of adults and children (ages 15+) living with HIV/AIDS increased more than 10-fold to about 69,000 persons by 2006; with a prevalence rate of about 0.5 per cent (Table 1). While the overall level is still relatively low in Malaysia as compared to 1.0 per cent for the world as a whole, the rapid rise is cause for concern.

Table 1 : General HIV/AIDS Situation in Malaysia, end 2005

Adult (ages 15+) HIV prevalence rate (range: 0.2-1.5%)	0.5
Mother-to-child transmission, Estimated number of people (all ages) living with HIV (range: 33,000-220,000)	69,000
Mother-to-child transmission, Estimated number of women (ages 15+) living with HIV (range: 7,300-57,000)	17,000
Percentage of pregnant women receiving treatment to reduce mother-to-child transmission	6.1
Percentage of HIV-infected women and men receiving antiretroviral therapy	27.0
Orphans, children (ages 0-17 years) orphaned due to all causes, estimate	480,000
Adults aged 15 and over living with HIV (range: 32,000-220,000)	67,000
Deaths due to AIDS (range: 2,100-7,200)	4,000

Sources : UNICEF, 2005 and UNAIDS, 2006

In Malaysia, the most common risk factor for HIV infection was exposure to contaminated drug injecting equipment (which accounted for three in four HIV infections in 2002, most of them were men, aged 20-40 years) (UNAIDS, 2006). Available information indicates that a small but growing proportion of new HIV infections is attributable to unsafe sex, much of it between current or former injecting drug users, their sexual partners and sex workers (Ministry of Health Malaysia and WHO, 2004).

The Ministry of Health and the Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC), in collaboration with other NGOs are carrying out educational campaigns to control the spread of this pandemic. To increase the awareness of HIV/AIDS, the MAC has collaborated with the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development to commemorate the International AIDS Memorial Day 2004 with the theme "Women and HIV/AIDS" to lay the ground work for combating this scourge from women's perspective. As a result of continuous campaigns from the government, this can be said that 95.5 per cent of adolescent (ages 13-24) had ever heard of HIV/AIDS (Table 2).

Table 2 : The Percentage of Adolescent (ages 13-24) Had Ever Heard of HIV/AIDS by Sex

	Male	Female	Total
Ever Heard	95.0	95.9	95.5
Never Heard	5.0	4.1	4.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source : 4th Malaysian Population and Family Survey, 2004

In 2001, there were a total of 723 public/NGO sites offering PMTCT services, and they were able to cover 100 per cent of population in need of such services. However, only a small proportion of those in need of VCT, ARV and antiretroviral therapy services had received such services (see Table 3).

Table 3 : Access to Care and Treatment For HIV/AIDS, Malaysia, 2001

Indicator	Number/per cent
Population in need that received VCT services (est. %)	11
Number of clients receiving public/NGO VCT services	2,260
Number of public/NGO VCT sites	120
Population in need that received PMTCT services (est. %)	100
Number of clients receiving public/NGO PMTCT services	1,409,537
Number of public/NGO sites offering PMTCT services	723
Population in need that received ARV treatment (est. %)	22
Number of clients currently provided with antiretroviral therapy by the public/NGO sector	1,100
Number of public/NGO sites offering antiretroviral therapy services	20
Adult population in need that received cotrimoxazole prophylaxis (est. %)	67
Adult population in need that received TB treatment with DOTS (est. %)	74
Number of patients receiving DOTS	15,057

Source : WHO, 2002



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