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ALARMING INCREASE IN HIV CASES IN MALAYSIA

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 8 (Bernama) -- The World Health Organisation (WHO) have estimated that one out of every 200 or 0.5 per cent of Malaysian adults are now HIV-positive, said Malaysian AIDS Council president Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir today.

"It means that if we have 10 million adults, about 50,000 of them are infected by HIV," she said briefing reporters at the 5th International Congress on Aids in Asia and the Pacific (ICAAP) media workshop here.

She said the estimated gradual increase of HIV-infected cases from 10,000 in 1993 to 50,000 in 1997 indicated that the problem is alarming in this country.

The UN organisation also predicted that by the end of the year, approximately 170,000 Malaysians are to be infected by HIV, she said, adding that there were so many unreported cases in this country.

She said the figure only reflects "test" cases because a lot of people refused to go for blood tests since the disease is considered as a silent epidemic.

Women and children infected by HIV are also on the rise, she warned, and claimed that 90 per cent of the infections were spread by men.

As of May this year, there were 30,187 "reported cases" of HIV-positive symptoms, she added.

-- BERNAMA

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