
Council: AIDS situation not under control

STAR - 7DEC2001
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KUALA LUMPUR: The HIV/AIDS situation in Malaysia is not under control, despite continuous efforts to curb the spread of the disease, according to the Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC).

"There were three reported cases of HIV in 1986. As of July this year, the total number of reported HIV cases stands at 41,503." Council president Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir said yesterday.

Speaking at a public forum entitled "The HIV/AIDS Situation in Malaysia : Are We Doing Enough?" at the National Science Centre here, she said that while reports of HIV cases have been increasing steadily every year, the actual numbers were not known.

"Many people have no idea that they are HIV-positive. In addition, our data collection system is

flawed and biased towards drug users because of the mandatory testing"

"The actual number of HIV/AIDS cases in the country could be anywhere from two to five times the reported cases," she said.

More alarmingly, data collected from the Government-initiated Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission programme has shown that the number of reported HIV-

positive women have increased by 9% over the last ten years.

Health Minister Datuk Chua Jui Meng said his ministry was exploring the possibility of compulsory licensing and parallel importing of anti-retroviral drugs under the Patents Act 2000, while negotiating for further price reductions.

"We are also exploring the use of traditional and complementary medicine in HIV/AIDS."