

13/11/2001

Educating the public on HIV/AIDS

Hizreen Kamal

IN conjunction with the recent World AIDS Day, an exhibition on HIV/AIDS was jointly organised by the residents' association of the Sri Kelantan public housing and the Kuala Lumpur City Hall in Bandar Baru Sentul, Kuala Lumpur recently.

Aiming at creating awareness among the public on the danger of the epidemic, the one-day exhibition was also held to disseminate accurate information on the deadly disease, as well as to educate them on what they can do to assist those infected with the disease.

The event, held at the parking area of the Sri Kelantan flats, attracted some 300 Sentul residents.

It was opened by City Hall Advisory Board member Ma Woei Chyi, who stood in for Batu MP Ng Lip Yong.

The exhibition also saw the participation of several related Governmental agencies and non-Governmental organisations.

Among them were the Sentul District Police station, Health Ministry, Information Department, the Federal Territory National Security Unit, Malaysian Aids Council and the All Women's Action Society.

A talk on HIV/AIDS was delivered by Malaysian Aids Council president Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir, while an ex-addict, Mohd Rashid Hashim, who is also an officer with the National Drug Agency Federal Territory branch, touched on the link between drugs and AIDS.

There was also a question-and-answer session between the residents there and Marina.

Apart from that, there was also a colouring contest, which saw the participation of 150 pupils.

Sri Kelantan public housing residents' association chairman Mat Zin Hanafi said an exhibition on the highly-stigmatised disease was important for the public to be informed on the latest updates on HIV/AIDS, as well as the dangers of it.

"Many people, including residents of Sri Kelantan, are still oblivious in regards to the danger of the disease. Some took the opportunity to obtain more information about HIV/AIDS during the question-and-answer session with Marina," he said.

"The idea to have the exhibition was mooted by the association and was supported by City Hall," he added.

Mat Zin also thanked the City Hall for their assistance in making the exhibition a reality.

He also hoped the event would give a comprehensive outlook on the danger of the disease to the public.

"We hope to make it an annual event for the benefit of the residents here," Mat Zin added.

Meanwhile, Marina when addressing the crowd said, the number of reported cases of HIV/AIDS was rapidly increasing every year.

As of June this year, reported cases of those infected by HIV/AIDS were recorded at 40,000, compared to only 6,000 in 1993.