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Hamid-AIDS

OVER 70 PER CENT OF HIV/AIDS VICTIMS ARE MALAYS

PUTRAJAYA, May 13 (Bernama) -- The lack of understanding about HIV/AIDS or Acquired Immune Difficiency Syndrome has led certain sectors of the Muslim community to take the matter lightly.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Abdul Hamid Zainal Abidin said today that when people do not understand the disease they ostracise the sufferers as in the case of HIV/AIDS victims.

He said this at a media conference on the '2nd Islamic Leaders International Consultation on Dealing with HIV/AIDS' to be held here from May 19 to 23.

Religious organisations in Malaysia also helped eradicate drug abuse - believed to be the main reason many Malays were infected with the disease.

"The awareness must increase so that future generations can avoid falling prey to drug addiction and becoming infected with AIDS," he said.

Malaysian Aids Council President Datuk Paduka Marina Mahathir said, till last year, over 34,500 or 72 per cent of HIV/Aids victims were Malays.

She said the international consultation would draw together religious leaders, researchers, and non-governmental organisations to exchange views on overcoming the spread of AIDS - a disease that remains incurable.

"It could also be used to create a network to increased awareness and understanding," she added.

Over 300 participants are expected at the event organised jointly by the Malaysian Islamic Development Department and the Malaysian Aids Council.

The event themed 'The Caring Ummah: Transforming the Response' is hoped to create an action plan and charter to allow Muslims to create an environment where HIV/AIDS can be overcome using Islamic approach.

-- BERNAMA

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