

TB Still Leading Cause Of Infectious Disease Mortality In Malaysia

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LABUAN, March 28 (Bernama) -- Tuberculosis (TB) is still the leading cause of infectious disease mortality in Malaysia, with 1,603 cases reported last year compared to 1,597 in 2013.

Throughout last year, a total of 543,146 patients with symptoms of TB were screened and of the number, 15,232 were tested positive through sputum, while 9,479, through chest x-ray.

Ministry of Health director general Datuk Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said concerted efforts to control the spread of TB in Malaysia were needed as the cases had increased by 2.7 per cent from 24,071 in 2013 to 24,711 last year.

He urged medical practitioners, private agencies, non-governmental organisations and relevant agencies to help contain the spread of TB through carrying out strategic health screening programmes.

Dr Noor Hisham said TB susceptible groups included inmates in correctional centres, senior citizens in old folk homes, HIV-infected patients, diabetics and smokers.

"We can still control the spread with early detection and treatment," he said while launching the national level World TB Day here Saturday.

He said the World Health Organisation (WHO) reported that 1.5 million people died of TB worldwide and at least nine million new cases had been detected including 550,000 children.

The WHO report also stated that 80,000 children worldwide died of the disease in 2013, he said.

Meanwhile, Dr Noor Hisham said Labuan had the highest TB burden with an incidence rate of more than 100 cases per 100,000 population.

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