

HIV AND AIDS IN MALAYSIA

Q. When was HIV first detected in Malaysia?

A. The first case of HIV infection diagnosed in Malaysia was reported in 1986.

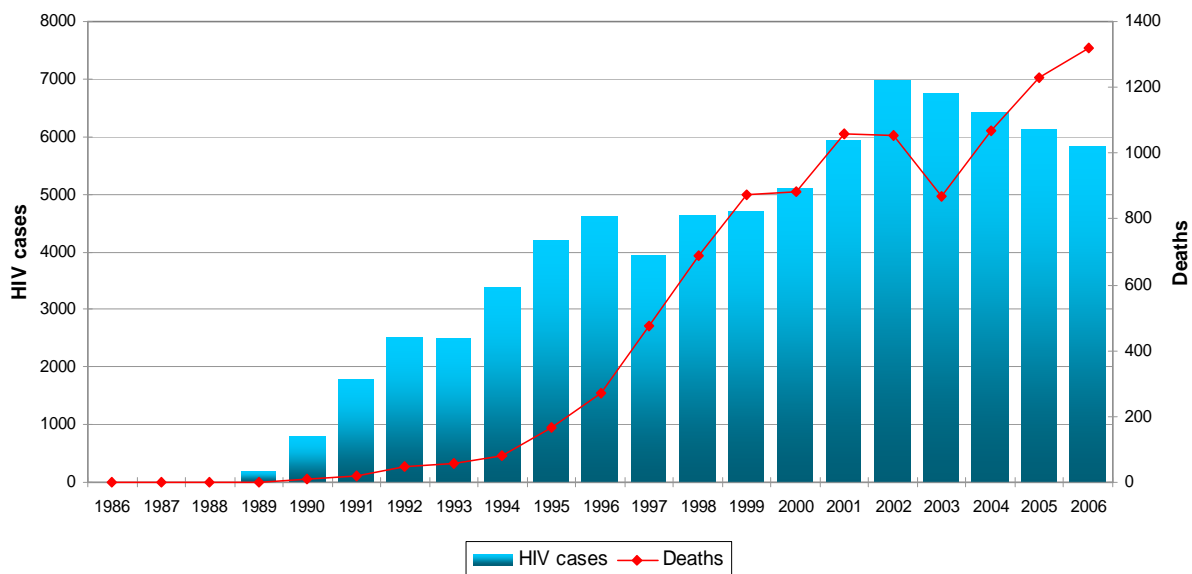
Q. How many people have been infected with HIV and how many have died of AIDS since the first reported case?

- A.** According to June 2007 statistics from the Ministry of Health (MOH):
- 78, 784 people have tested HIV-positive in Malaysia since 1986
 - 10, 909 people have died of AIDS

The MOH statistics reveal

- 2,395 new HIV cases were reported in the first six months of 2007
- an average of 16 people tested HIV-positive each day in 2006
- The rate of infection is increasing with the number of new cases doubling every three years

HIV INFECTIONS AND AIDS-RELATED DEATHS IN MALAYSIA: 1986 - 2006



Q. Are these numbers the actual numbers of HIV infections in the country?

A. No. Low levels of understanding and a [misconception](#) that HIV is a risk only to injecting drug users and sex workers lead some people to continue practicing unsafe behaviours and deny the need to undergo a HIV test.

As such, it is accepted that the actual figures could be 2-3 times the official reported number of infections.

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Q. What is the main mode of HIV transmission in Malaysia?

A. The epidemic in Malaysia is dominated by injecting drug users, mainly male who make up about 73% of all cases of HIV and AIDS.

According to the National Drug Agency report for December 2006, the total number of drug users recorded for the period of 1988 - 2006 is 300,241 people, approximately 1.1% of Malaysia's population.

According to MOH December 2006 statistics, 55,534 of the 180,000 detected injecting drug users in the country have been reported to be infected with HIV.

Although drug use appears to be the main mode of transmission that is fueling the epidemic in Malaysia, there is concern that heterosexual transmission is on the rise. MOH December 2006 statistics indicate that heterosexual transmission of newly diagnosed cases has increased from 5% in 1990 to 27% of new reported cases in 2006.

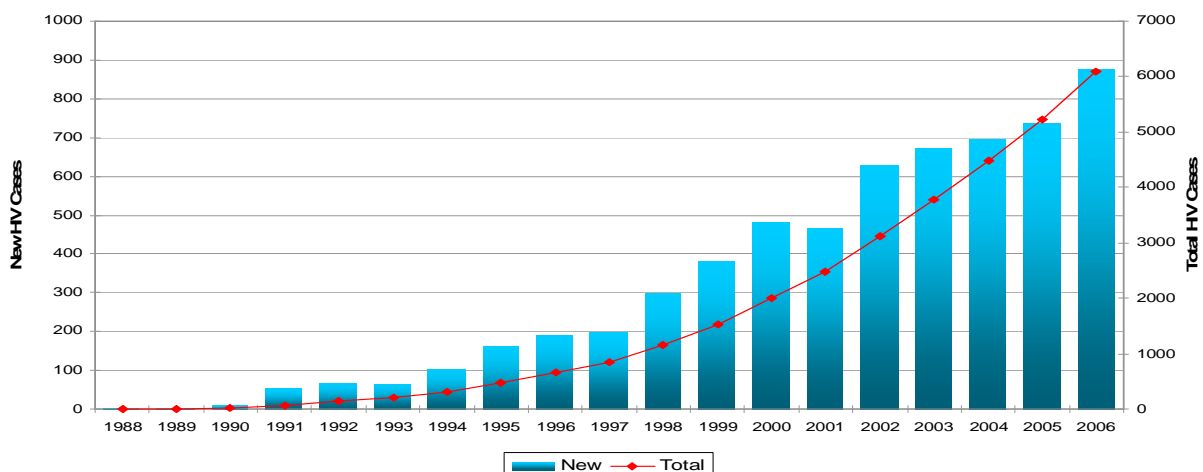
Q. Are women part of these statistics?

A. The proportion of women reported with HIV has increased dramatically in the last decade :

- In 1990, women made up 1% of new reported infections that year, while in 1996, only 4% of new reported infections were amongst women and girls. The number tripled by end 2006 where women accounted for 15% of new reported infections.
- According to MOH, 1 in 7 new reported cases in 2006 was a woman as compared to 1 in 86 cases in 1990.
- More housewives are testing HIV-positive than sex workers in Malaysia. The rate is between four to five times more than sex workers.

One factor in this rise may be the increased coverage and accessibility of HIV testing for women.

**WOMEN, GIRLS AND HIV, 1988 – 2006:
1 in 7 new infections in 2006 is a female!**





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Q. Are many children infected with HIV in Malaysia?

- A. According to MOH December 2006 statistics, children below the age of 13 made up for 0.92% of total reported cases. The low numbers of children infected with HIV can be attributed to the Government's [Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission](#) program initiated in 1988.

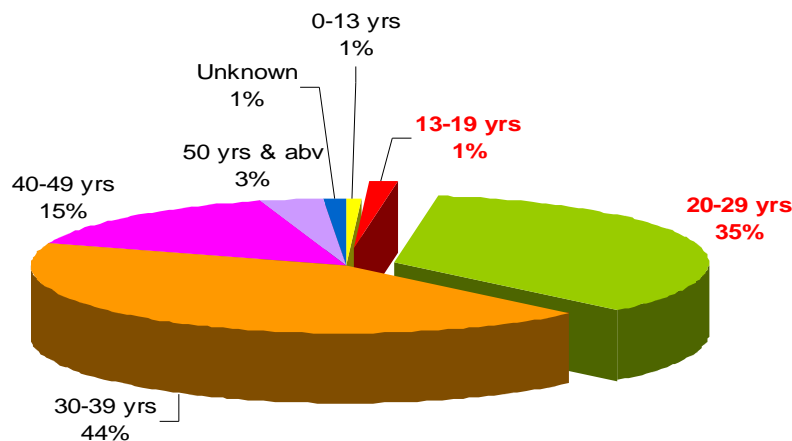
Under the program, women found to be HIV-positive are given post-test counselling and free anti-retroviral treatment. Pregnant women who are HIV-positive are given drugs throughout the antenatal and intra-partum period. They are also eligible for free Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy (HAART) from the Government.

Infants are given drugs for the first 6 weeks of life. The HIV antibody test is done on infants at regular intervals until they are confirmed negative at 2 years of age.

Q. Are many young people infected with HIV in Malaysia?

- A. Young people in Malaysia, like in most parts of the world, account for an increasing number of HIV infections every year. According to MOH December 2006 statistics, 27,837 (36.44%) are amongst those aged between 13 – 29 years old.

Because of [denial to test](#), most people who report HIV-positive before the age of 30 were in all likelihood infected in their twenties and sometimes even during their teens due the length of time for HIV to weaken the immune system and for opportunistic infections to occur.



Q. Why is the rate of HIV infections increasing in Malaysia?

- A. Gender inequity, stigma, discrimination, silence, denial and ignorance are widespread and fuel the epidemic.