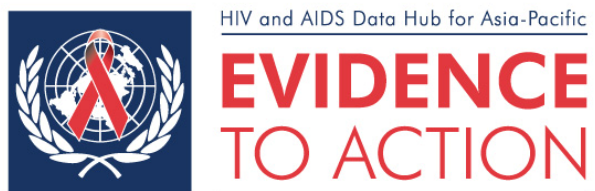


Country Review

Malaysia



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NATIONAL RESPONSE

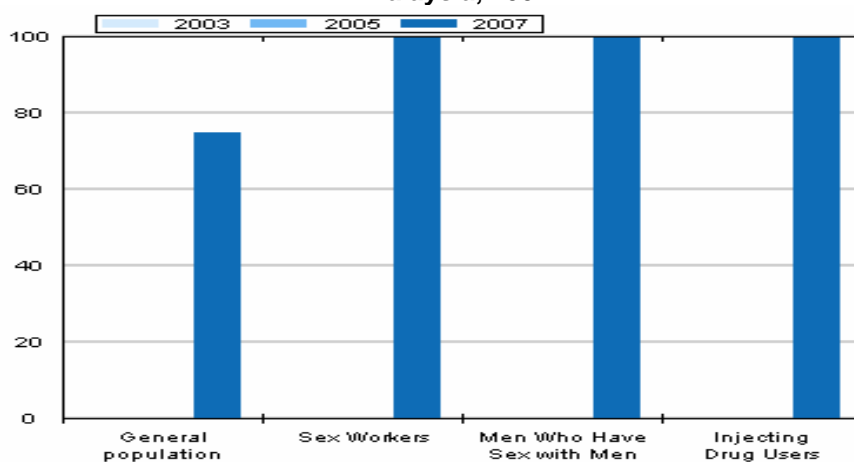
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Seventy-five per cent of 530,789 women and men aged 15-49 received an HIV test in the past 12 months prior to the survey and knew the result. On the other hand, 100% of 21,497 IDUs and MSM were screened for HIV and were aware of their status [4].

Figure 10: % of women and men aged 15-49 and most-at-risk populations who received an HIV test in the last 12 months and who know the results, Malaysia, 2007



(Source: UNAIDS, Progress towards Universal Access and The Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, http://cfs.indicatorregistry.org/country_factsheet.aspx?ISO=VTN)

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Of the estimated 1,300 (or a range of 770-2000) pregnant women living with HIV needing ART for PMTCT, 9% to 24% received antiretrovirals in 2007 [12]. On the other hand, 2008 UNGASS report indicated that 100% of 328 HIV-positive pregnant women had received antiretrovirals to reduce the risk of mother-to-child HIV transmission [4]. The same report revealed that 51% of 13,080 adults and children with advanced HIV infection were receiving ART.

HIV financing

The Government of Malaysia has allocated less than USD10 million per annum for the national response to HIV and AIDS. A three-fold increase in this allocation, now totaling more than USD30 million per annum, has been made available to both government agencies and civil society organizations for the next five years (2006-2010) in support of implementation of the current National Strategic Plan [4].

Malaysia Country Profile



Malaysia at a glance	
Total population (thousands)	26,572 (2007) [1a]
Annual population growth rate	1.7% (2005-2010) [1a]
Population aged 15-49 (thousands)	14,362 (2007) [1a]
Percentage of population in urban areas	69% (2007) [1a]
Crude birth rate (births per 1,000 population)	20.9 (2007) [1a]
Under-5 mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	12 (2006) [1b]
Human Development Index (HDI)– Rank/Value	63/0.811 (2005) [2]
Life expectancy at birth (years)	72 (2006) [1b]
Adult literacy rate	91 (2006) [1c]
Ratio of girls to boys in primary and secondary education (%)	104 (2005) [3]
GDP per capita (PPP, \$US)	10,882 (2005) [2]
Per capita total health expenditure (Int.\$)	454 (2005) [1b]

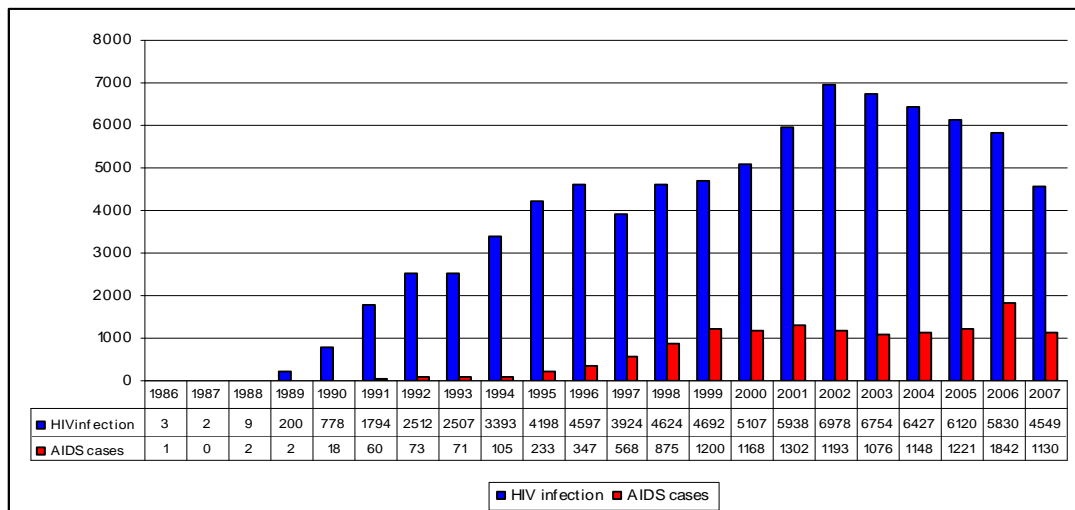
Source: United Nations Cyberschoolbus, 2008

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE HIV EPIDEMIC

The first three cases of HIV in Malaysia were detected in 1986. The Ministry of Health reported that from 1986 to end December 2007, there were an estimated cumulative number of 80,938 HIV and 13,635 AIDS cases. The total number of new HIV infections and AIDS cases had been fluctuating from 1996 to 2001, climbing again in 2002 and gradually descending until 2007 at about 6,000 cases per year. On the other hand, the number of AIDS cases was highest in 2006 (Figure 1).

The HIV epidemic is mainly driven by injecting drug use and heterosexual transmission. Amongst men, the main mode of HIV transmission continues to be via injecting drug use. The Ministry of Health reported that most HIV infections amongst women have occurred through heterosexual transmission. More men than women are infected by HIV & AIDS (Figure 2). However, women and girls are increasingly getting infected with HIV, constituting almost one-fifth of newly infected persons nationwide in 2006 compared to being barely 5% ten years ago. Children aged 13 years below comprised 2% of cumulative total of HIV infections from 1986 to December 2006 [4].

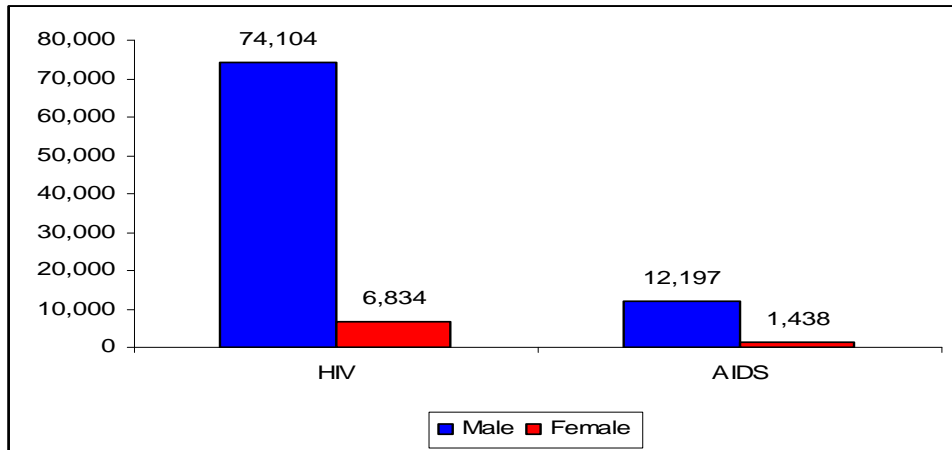
Figure 1: Estimated number of people living with HIV in Malaysia, 1986-2007



(Source: STI Unit, Ministry of Health Malaysia, Resource Center, Malaysian AIDS Council, 1986- December 2007 cited by PT Foundation, <http://ptfmalaysia.org/statistic.htm>)

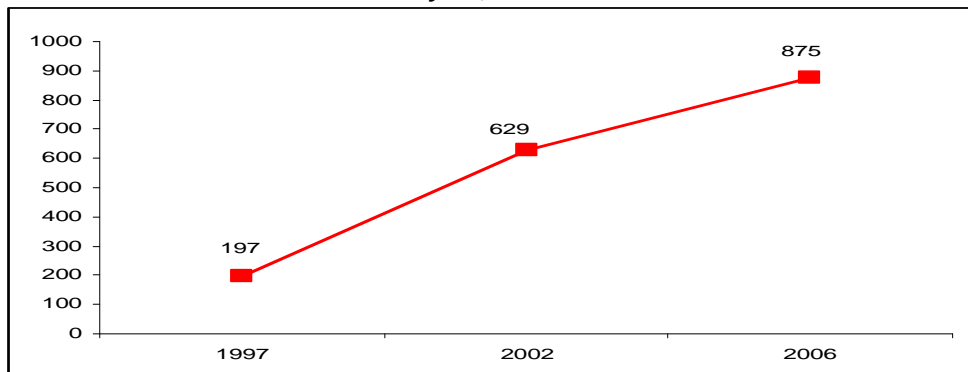
WHO ARE AT RISK OF HIV IN MALAYSIA?

Figure 2: Cumulative number of HIV and AIDS cases, by gender, Malaysia, 1986-2007



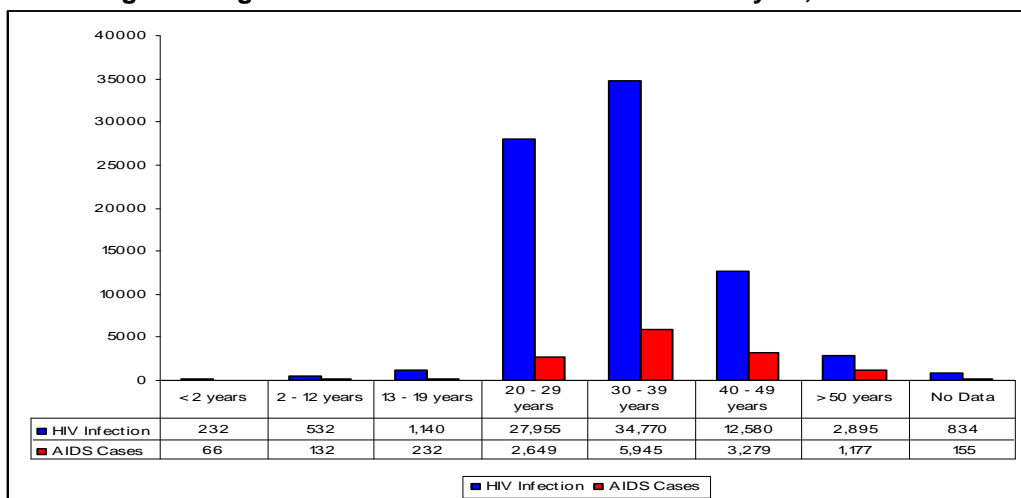
(Source: STI Unit, Ministry of Health Malaysia, Resource Center, Malaysian AIDS Council, 1986-December 2007 cited by PT Foundation, <http://ptfmalaysia.org/statistic.htm>)

Figure 3: Annual number of HIV reported cases among women and girls, Malaysia, 1997-2006



(Source: UNGASS Country Report Malaysia January 2006 to December 2007)

Figure 4: Age distribution of HIV & AIDS cases Malaysia, 1986-2007

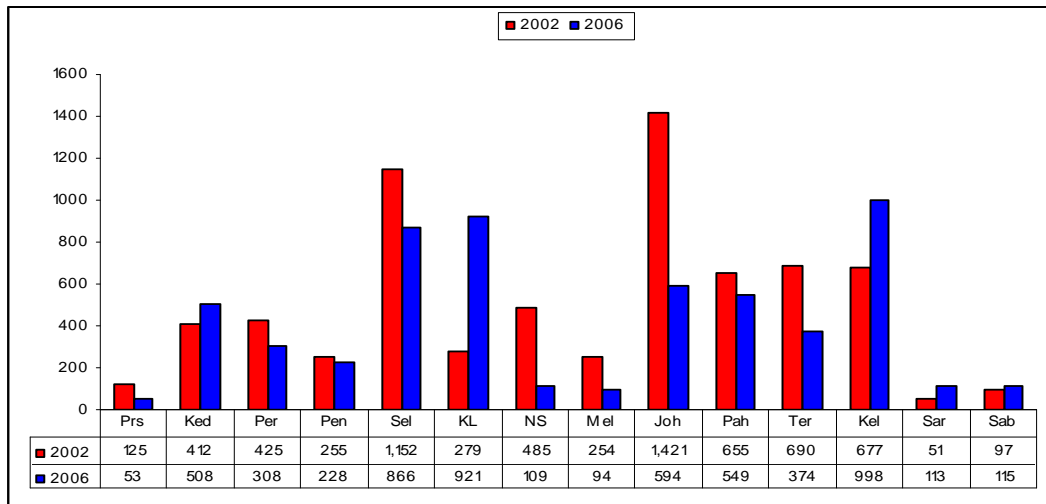


(Source: STI Unit, Ministry of Health Malaysia, Resource Center, Malaysian AIDS Council, 1986-December 2007 cited by PT Foundation, <http://ptfmalaysia.org/statistic.htm>)

HIV and AIDS cases are very limited in numbers before age 20 and are predominant amongst people aged 30-39 years.

Eight out of the 14 states in Malaysia have reported increases in the number of new reported HIV cases amongst women (Figure 5). On the other hand, Perlis, Penang, Johor and the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur recorded decreases between 2002 and 2006. The states of Kelantan, Kuala Lumpur and Selangor remain the top three regions where HIV amongst women is highest compared to the other states recorded in 2006. Kelantan, with a cumulative total of 970 reported female cases of HIV, is the state with the highest number of women found to be infected since 1986 [4].

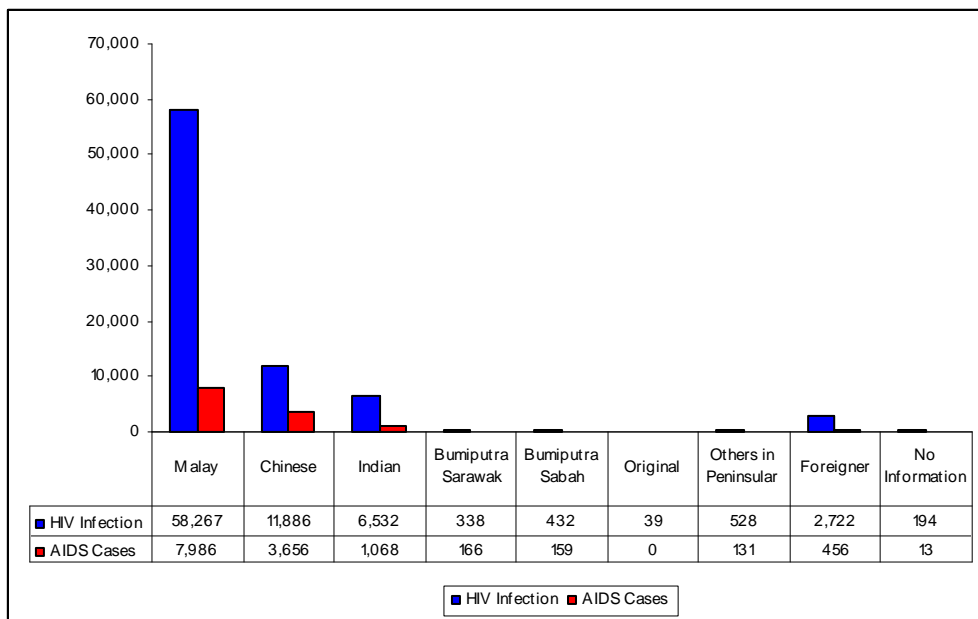
Figure 5: Reported new HIV infections amongst women by states, Malaysia, 2002 and 2006



(Source: Ministry of Health, Malaysia (June 2007) cited in UNGASS Country Report Malaysia January 2006 to December 2007)

The majority of cumulative HIV and AIDS cases from 1986 to 2007 was found amongst the Malays (72%), followed by the Chinese (15%) and the Indians (8%). The mode of HIV transmission varies by ethnicity. For instance, HIV acquired through IDU is most commonly found in Malay and Indian ethnic groups. On the other hand, heterosexual transmission is most prevalent amongst Chinese Malaysians. Evidence however points to the epidemic spreading into the indigenous population and those living in the East Malaysia states, Sabah and Sarawak.

Figure 6: Reported HIV infections by ethnicity, Malaysia, 1986-2007

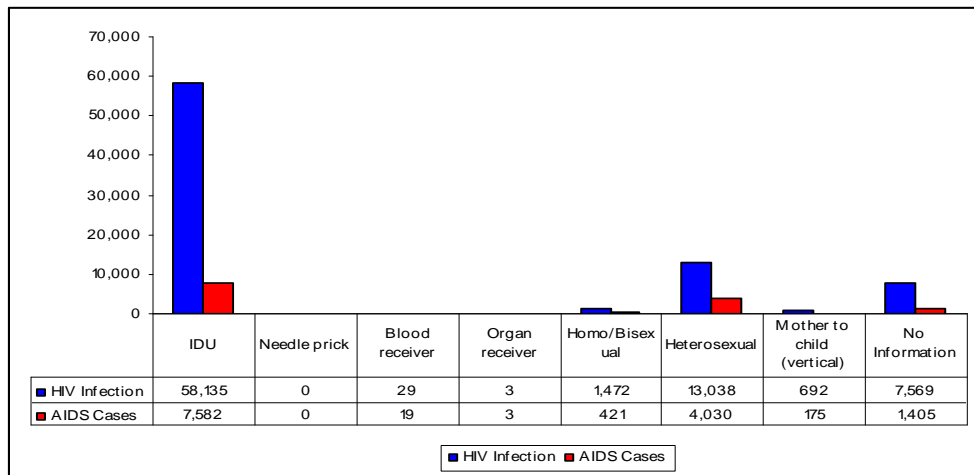


(Source: Ministry of Health, Malaysia (June 2007) cited in UNGASS Country Report Malaysia January 2006 to December 2007)

Injecting drug use, mainly through the use and sharing of contaminated needles, remains the predominant mode of HIV transmission. In a separate report [4], the Ministry of Health reported a downward trend in IDU cases, from

74.2% in 2002 to 53.6% in 2006. Conversely, the proportion of heterosexually acquired HIV infections has steadily and consistently increased from 17.5% in 2002 to 27.4% in 2006.

**Figure 7: Modes of transmission of new HIV infections
Malaysia, 2007**



(Source: Ministry of Health, Malaysia (June 2007) cited in UNGASS Country Report Malaysia January 2006 to December 2007)

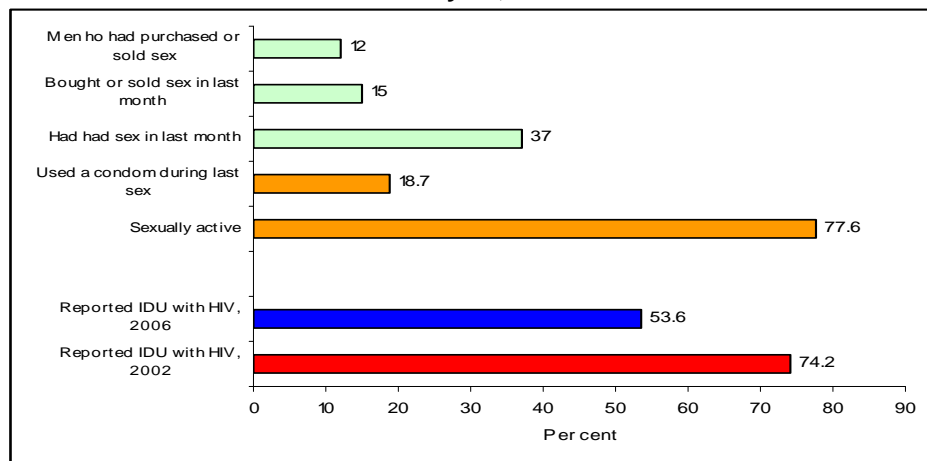
The nature of occupation of 5 in 10 of reported HIV and AIDS cases from 1986 to end December 2007 has not been clearly specified. On the other hand, nearly 18% of HIV-positive persons had no jobs. Those working in factories and the private sector accounted for 4.7% and 3.4%, respectively, of total HIV cases. Sex workers only comprised 0.6%.

Injecting drug use

As of end 2007, a cumulative total of 58,135 cases of injecting drug use had been recorded. IDUs in Malaysia are typically male, young, of Malay ethnicity and heterosexual. Women represent only a fraction (around 2%) of the reported number of drug users. Overall, there has been a slight decrease (by about 3%) in IDU cases from 2002 (74.2%) to 2007 (71.8%).

A 2006 Behavioural Surveillance Survey (BSS) conducted with IDUs indicated that 37% had had sex in the last month prior to the survey, 15% had bought or sold sex in the last month, and 12% of the men had purchased or sold sex. All of the female respondents had bought or sold sex. In a separate report of the Cabinet Subcommittee for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Drug Users, it was revealed that 77.6% of IDUs at drug rehabilitation centres were sexually active, and that only 18.7% used a condom during sex.

**Figure 8: Sexual risk behaviours and condom use of Injecting Drug Users,
Malaysia, 2006**



(Sources: Rozaida Talib (2006); 2006 Behavioral Surveillance Survey cited in UNGASS Country Report Malaysia, January 2006 to December 2007)

Sex workers

The cumulative number of sex workers found to have acquired HIV since the beginning of the epidemic was 0.6% of the 80,938 HIV cases in 2007 [5]. A number of key studies conducted with female, male and transsexual sex workers indicated that HIV prevalence amongst those selling sex was above 5% [6].

A WHO-supported survey on sexually transmitted infections (STI) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia [7] revealed that 41% of sex workers had at least one STI and 31% showed symptoms of syphilis infection. The high level of STI indicates the presence of high-risk sexual behaviour, including low condom use.

In the 2004 BSS conducted by the Ministry of Health amongst sex workers, almost 20% of female respondents reported using drugs in one form or another [4]. A recent (2007) study also indicated that drug use and in particular, the sharing of needles, was prevalent amongst female sex workers [10].

Men who have sex with men

Even though HIV transmission is a growing concern amongst this group around the region, there are no official data on either HIV prevalence or risk behaviours amongst men who have sex with men in Malaysia. The Ministry of Health National AIDS Surveillance Report from 1986 to December 2007 indicated that 1.8% of 80,938 and 3.08% of 13,635 cumulative HIV and AIDS cases, respectively, were infected through homosexual/bisexual activities [8].

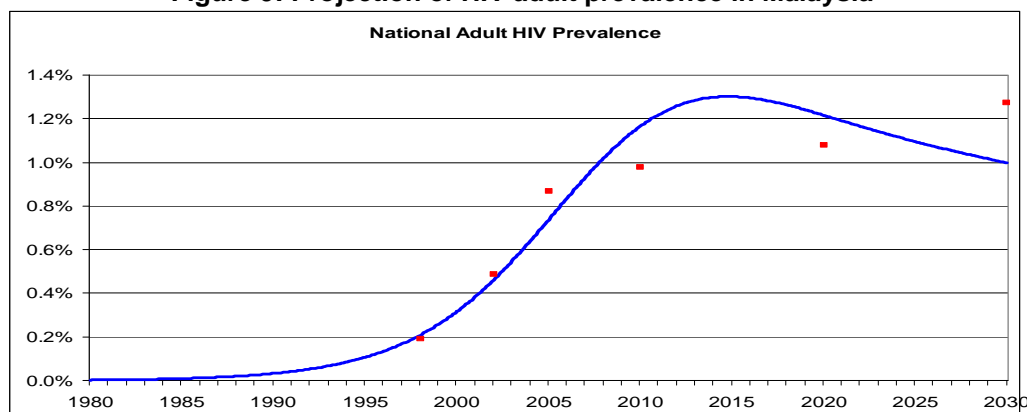
A 2004 assessment of HIV prevention work for the MSM population in Kuala Lumpur [9] found that MSM frequent several gay and gay-friendly venues and spaces to socialize and/or locate potential sex partners. Urban gay venues found in many cities worldwide now thrive in KL, including bars, clubs/discos, restaurants, saunas/bathhouses, and massage centers (parlors). Cruising parks also dot the city where MSM “cruise” for sexual partners or solicit male sex workers (“money boys”). Furthermore, gay-identified men are more likely to patronize gay venues, such as bars and clubs, than are “closeted” or non-gay identified MSM. However, as a male sex worker and a masseur reported, both gay-identified and non-gay-identified MSM patronize massage centers and cruising parks for sexual encounters. Their clients also frequent gay venues, such as bars and clubs. Saunas appear to be the only gay venue where MSM commonly participate in sexual activity.

HOW MIGHT HIV AFFECT TO MALAYSIA IN THE FUTURE?

A modeling exercise on HIV & AIDS in Malaysia projected that the peak of the HIV epidemic will be reached by 2015. Assuming the implementation of a proper intervention programme, there will be approximately 190,000 people living with HIV & AIDS in Malaysia, thus increasing the HIV prevalence rate to 1.3% [11].

A study on the burden of disease in 2001 also showed that, as a whole, HIV & AIDS represented 11.6% of burden of the Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALY) among infectious disease [11].

Figure 9: Projection of HIV adult prevalence in Malaysia



(Source: Center for Multidisciplinary Studies on Health and Development, Inc. Current situation of HIV/AIDS in Malaysia. Presentation at the Economic impact of HIV/AIDS in Asia Pacific, October 2-8, 2005)

NATIONAL RESPONSE

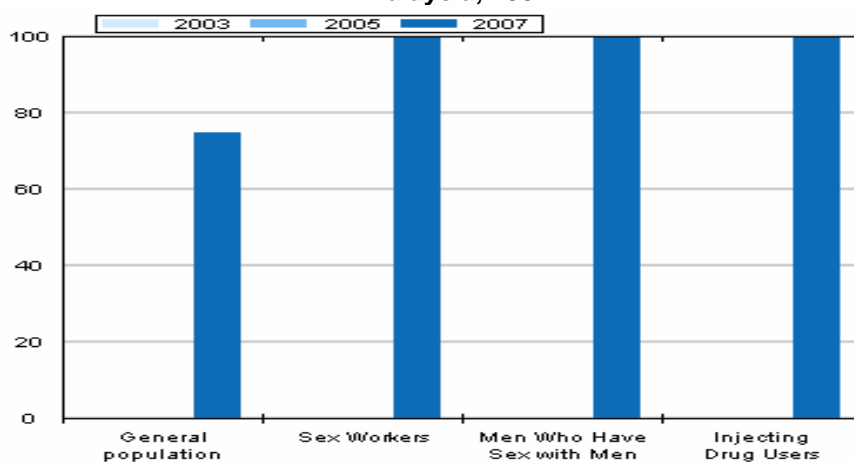
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Footnotes

- [1a] 2007 UN Population Division cited in WHO, UNAIDS and UNICEF, Epidemiological Fact Sheet on HIV and AIDS: Malaysia, July 2008
- [1b] World Health Statistics 2008, cited in WHO, UNAIDS and UNICEF, Epidemiological Fact Sheet on HIV and AIDS: Malaysia, July 2008
- [1c] UNESCO 2006, cited in WHO, UNAIDS and UNICEF, Epidemiological Fact Sheet on HIV and AIDS: Malaysia, July 2008
- [2] UNDP, Human Development Report, 2007/2008
- [3] World Development Indicators database. September 2008; <http://ddp-ext.worldbank.org/>. Data refers to the percentage of girls to boys enrolled at primary and secondary levels in public and private schools. UNESCO Institute for Statistics
- [4] UNGASS Country Report Malaysia, January 2006 to December 2007, January 2008
- [5] STI Unit, Ministry of Health Malaysia, Resource Center, Malaysian AIDS Council, 1986-December 2007 cited by PT Foundation, <http://ptfmalaysia.org/statistic.htm>
- [6] Ministry of Health (2005) cited in UNGASS Country Report Malaysia, January 2006 to December 2007
- [7] WHO WPRO, "Target AIDS prevention at sex workers and drug users, WHO urges," 2005, <http://www.wpro.who.int/NR/exeres/731BCCD2-5655-49D2-8341-61B61FB71381.htm>
- [8] PT Foundation, <http://ptfmalaysia.org/statistic.htm>
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- [10] Khartini Slamah (2007). Report on HIV/AIDS and female sex workers in Malaysia, May 2007 cited in UNGASS Country Report Malaysia, January 2006 to December 2007, January 2008
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Youth on AIDS. Malaysia at a glance. Accessed on July 20, 2007 at: <http://www.youandaids.org/Asia%20Pacific%20at%20a%20Glance/Malaysia/index.asp>.