

## Kuching records 121 drug addicts in first five months

September 16, 2015, Wednesday

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Abdul Karim (centre) speaks to the press about the latest drug statistics in the state, while (from left) Sebastian, Izhar, Wan Madihi and Sekam look on. Abdul Karim (centre) speaks to the press about the latest drug statistics in the state, while (from left) Sebastian, Izhar, Wan Madihi and Sekam look on.

**KUCHING:** Kuching Division recorded the highest number of drug addicts with 121 known addicts from January to May this year, followed by Samarahan (72) and Miri (57).

Assistant Minister of Social Development Datuk Abdul Karim Rahman Hamzah said based on statistics from National Anti-Drugs Agency (AADK) Kuching recorded 230 drug addicts, with 121 in Miri and 113 in Samarahan the whole of last year.

“Statistics for the first five months of this year shows there are 365 known drug addicts in the state, while 749 were recorded in 2014.

“The age group of 22 to 29 has the highest usage in both periods, with 309 addicts in 2014 and 155 as of May this year,” he told a press conference after chairing a Drug Eradication Action Council (MTMD) meeting yesterday.

In 2014, drug addicts below 17-years-old totaled 17, those between 18 and 21 stood at 107 and those between 30 and 39 was at 230.

This year’s number of drug addicts as of May below 17 years totaled six, 18 to 21 stood at 57 and 30 to 39 was at 103.

Abdul Karim noted that even though there were not many heavy drug abuse cases in the state, there was a worrying increase in the use of inhalants and synthetic drugs among youths.

“We are worried with the increase of inhalants usage among the youths with the most common one being glue-sniffing.

“There is also an increase in the usage of synthetic or designer drugs such as syabu and ice, as these are easy to manufacture and easy to smuggle and even easier to come by compared to traditional drugs like heroin and cocaine,” he said.

Abdul Karim said the growing concern spurred MTMD, which involves various agencies and even schools, Resident offices and district offices, to find ways to combat the problem.

“MTMD comes together to discuss and formulate ways to tackle the drugs problem among the youths. “We are working to create more awareness among the youths and society at large through various activities throughout the year,” he added.

AADK deputy director-general (operations) Izhar Abu Talib, AADK Sarawak director Wan Madihi Wan Salleh, State Narcotic Crime Investigation Department deputy chief DSP Sekam Anoi and Ministry of Social Development principal assistant secretary (development) Sebastian Sujang were also present at the press conference.