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Intervention the key in fight against AIDS in Malaysia

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KUALA LUMPUR: Intervention for sexual transmission has been included as one of the major activities in the battle against HIV in Malaysia.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam said the decision came after the ministry reviewed the current National Strategic Plan on AIDS with various parties, agencies and the Malaysian AIDS Council.

He said among the measures was education to instil behavioural change among society.

While there had been significant achievements in combating the disease, he said it was not the time to be complacent.

"Malaysia is observing a decline in annual reported cases, but the trend has changed from drug use to sexually transmitted infection," he said.

"There are rising cases among women and men who have sex with men," he said in his speech at the IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention opening session yesterday.

Dr Subramaniam said among the achievements were the introduction of compulsory licensing on anti-retrovirals that allowed generic medication to be imported in 2001.

He said that 15,084 patients were on Highly Active Anti-retroviral Therapy last year, which cost the Government RM59mil.