



Two Decades of Harm Reduction in Malaysia

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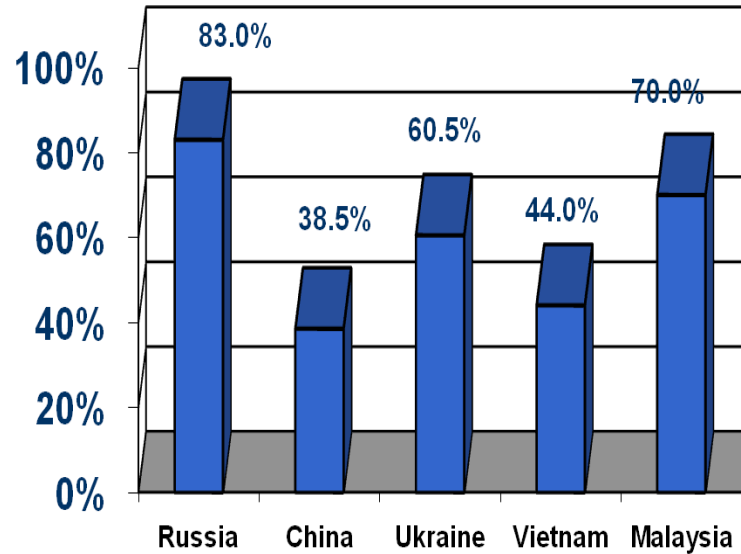
The War on Drugs in Malaysia

- Dominance of law enforcement over health
- Moral/religious framework linked to prohibition
- Abstinence



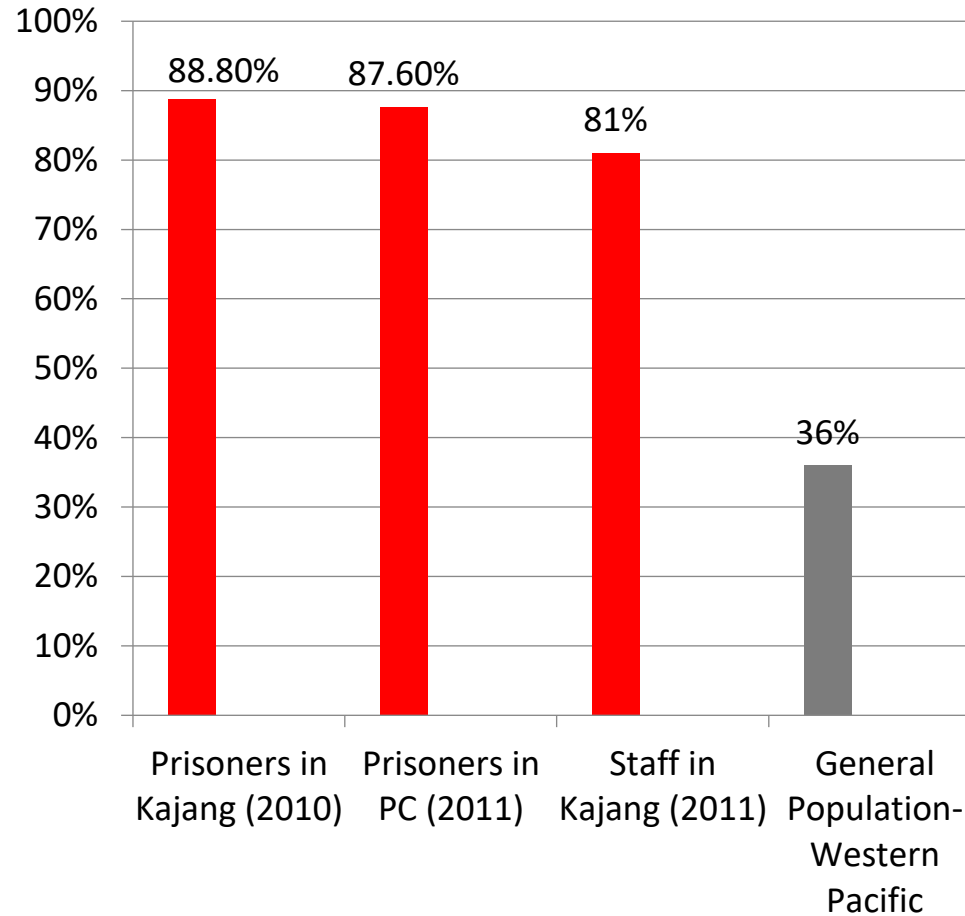
INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Mega Epidemic of HIV



■ IDUs as share of total reported HIV cases

Prevalence of Latent TB in Prison



PM supports move to supply needles, condoms

ZUBAIDAH
ABU BAKAR
reporting from
DOHA



DATUK Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi yesterday threw his support behind the controversial plan to give condoms and needles to drug users to curb the spread of AIDS.

He said the plan was the "best so far" for fighting HIV and AIDS, a problem that had reached a dangerous stage.

But if there were a better alternative to tackle the scourge, the Health Ministry would consider it, the Prime Minister said.

Abdullah, who is here to attend the G-77 summit, was speaking to Malaysian journalists.

Some 1,200 drug users will get condoms and needles in 10 government and private clinics in October on a trial basis.

The plan, announced by Health Minister Datuk Dr Chua Soi Lek early this month, has drawn mixed reactions, with many against the move.

Many religious groups have shot down the idea, saying that freely distributing condoms encourages sexual promiscuity.

However, Dr Chua gave an assurance that condoms would only be given to drug users under the close supervision of trained professionals.

Under the plan, 130,000 intravenous drug users will be given clean needles. More than 70 per cent of this group who are



COMMON CAUSE: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas (left) exchanging greetings with Abdullah during the summit of the G-77, the developing world's answer to the rich and powerful G-8, in Doha on Wednesday. — Reuters picture

sexually active will be given condoms.

Abdullah hoped the proposed briefings by Dr Chua and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Abdullah Md Zin to interest groups, including lead-

ers of all faiths, would clear doubts about the scheme and provide feedback to the authorities.

He said the Government was concerned by high risk of HIV/AIDS, especially among

wives of drug users.

The latest figures show 64,433 people infected with HIV.

If nothing is done to curb the spread of the disease, this number is expected to escalate to 300,000 by 2015.

HARM REDUCTION IN MALAYSIA

POA
1998 - 2005

NSP 2006 – 2010
Reduce HIV vulnerability among IDU

NSP 2011 – 2015
prevent / reduce infection, improve QoL of PLHIV, and
reduce the social and economic impact

NSPEA
2016 – 2030

Up scaling of harm reduction program

2001 - 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017

Jan 29,05 : PM statement on MDG HIV
Jan 15 – endorsement of MMT by NDEAC
June 3, 05 : MoH announcement on NSEP
June 23,05 : NTFHR
Oct, 05 : MMT piloted

- MMT in prison and NADA
- NSEP at health clinic

Feb 2006 : NSEP piloted
April 2006 – Malaysia cabinet Endorsement on HR

- Review of SOP

- Endorsement of up scaling of harm reduction in NSP 2011-2015
- Endorsement of up scaling MMT by JRP meeting
- Harm Reduction program by Global Fund
- Support activities of harm reduction by HIV/AIDS Alliance funding

- 2nd Review of SOP

NSPEA preparatory work

- Piloted KK Model Project
- 3rd Review of SOP
- Launching of NSPEA

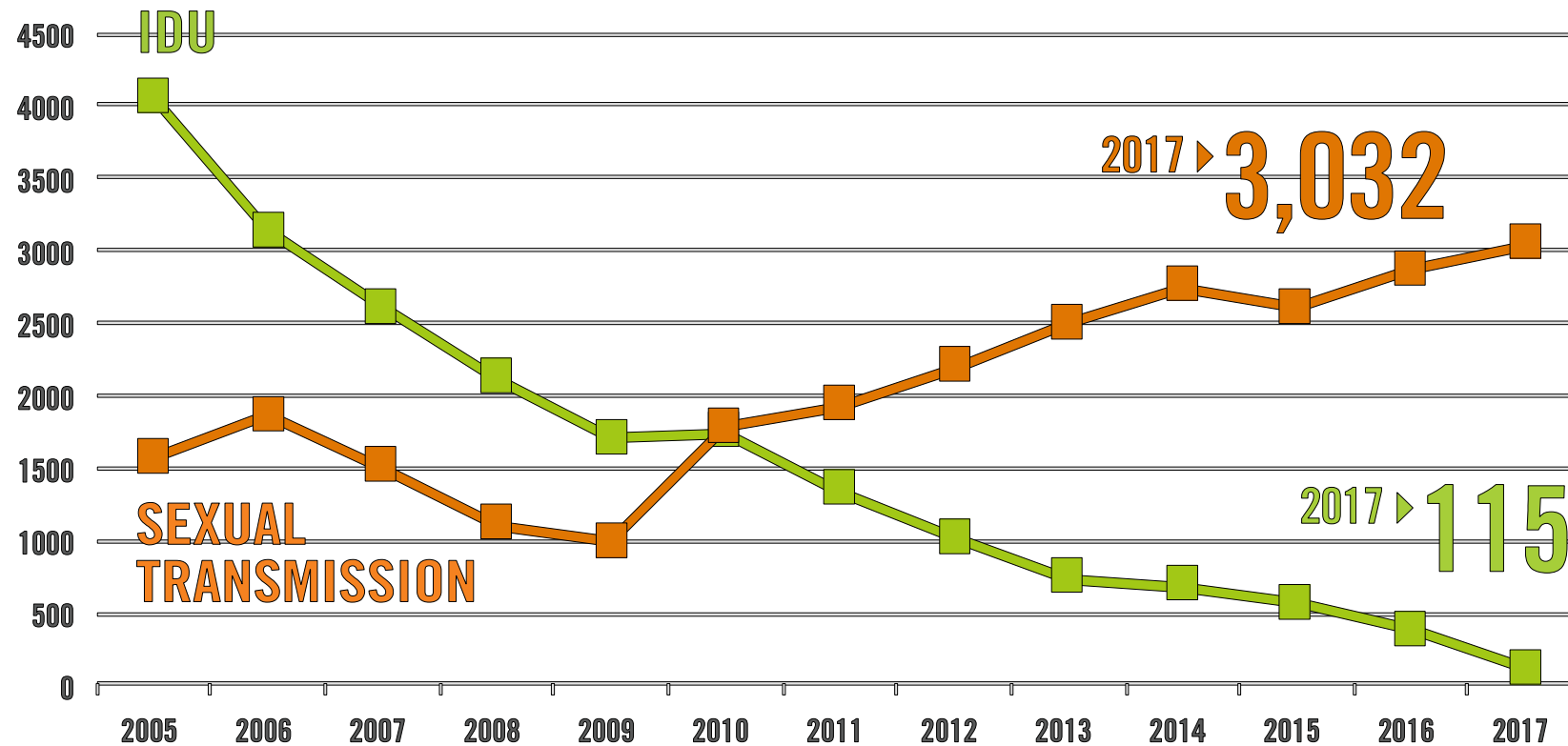
- Expansion KK Model Project
- 2nd Edition SOP Methadone
- HLM @ New York – Commitment in Ending AIDS

Community HIV Screening

2001 - The Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS adopted by United Nation General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS (UNGASS) in 2001, for which Malaysia was a signatory

2002- 2005 :
Proposal of harm reduction

HIV amongst PWID in Malaysia



Source: HIV/STI Sector, Division of Disease Control, Ministry of Health Malaysia

HARM REDUCTION

**OPIATE SUBSTITUTION THERAPY (OST)
- METHADONE TREATMENT-**

NEEDLE SYRINGE EXCHANGE PROGRAM (NSEP)



IEC

HEALTH & MEDICAL CARE

ARV Rx.

STD Rx.

*VCT

DRUG REHAB

Safe Sex
(Condom use)

COUNCELING

SOCIAL WELFARE

JOB PLACEMENT



Notes : * Community HIV Screening
** Harm Reduction – KK Model

Transformation of Compulsory Drug Detention Centers into Voluntary Evidence Based Treatment & Care Centers

**COMPULSORY
REHABILITATION
(PUSPEN)**



**19 CURE & CARE
REHABILITATION
CENTRES**



**OPEN ACCESS
AMBULATORY
VOLUNTARY
CENTRES**



**11 CURE & CARE
1MALAYSIA
CLINICS**



Outcome of Transforming Compulsory Drug Detention Centers into Voluntary Treatment & Care Centers



313 interviewed

56.3% - Helped maintain employment

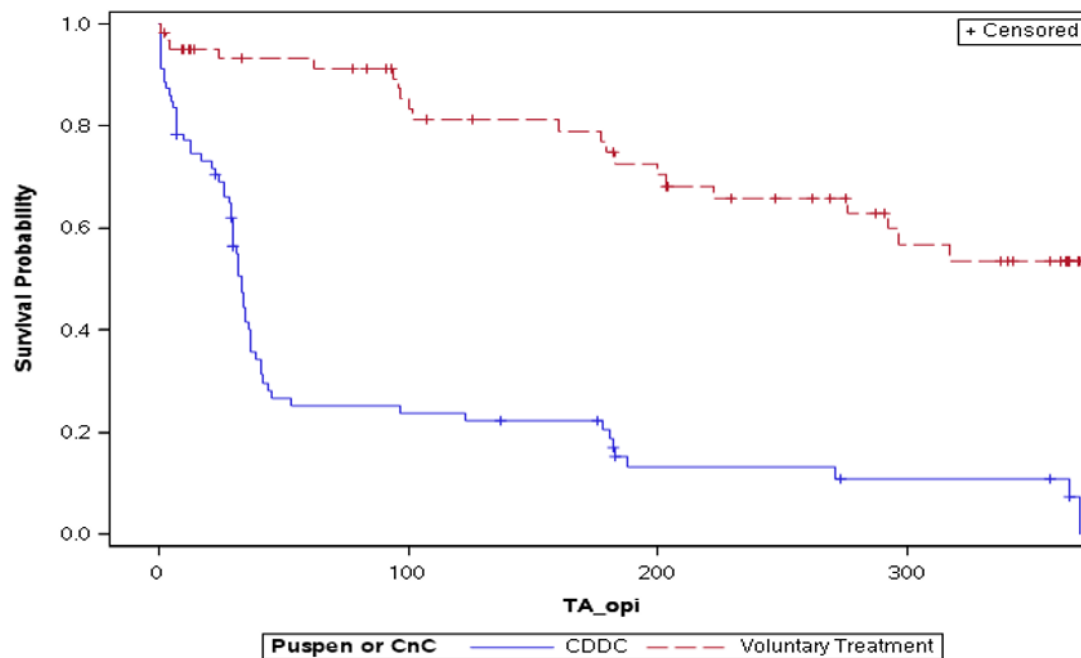
54.3% - Continued education

77.6% - Improved family relations

72.1% - Obtained permanent homes

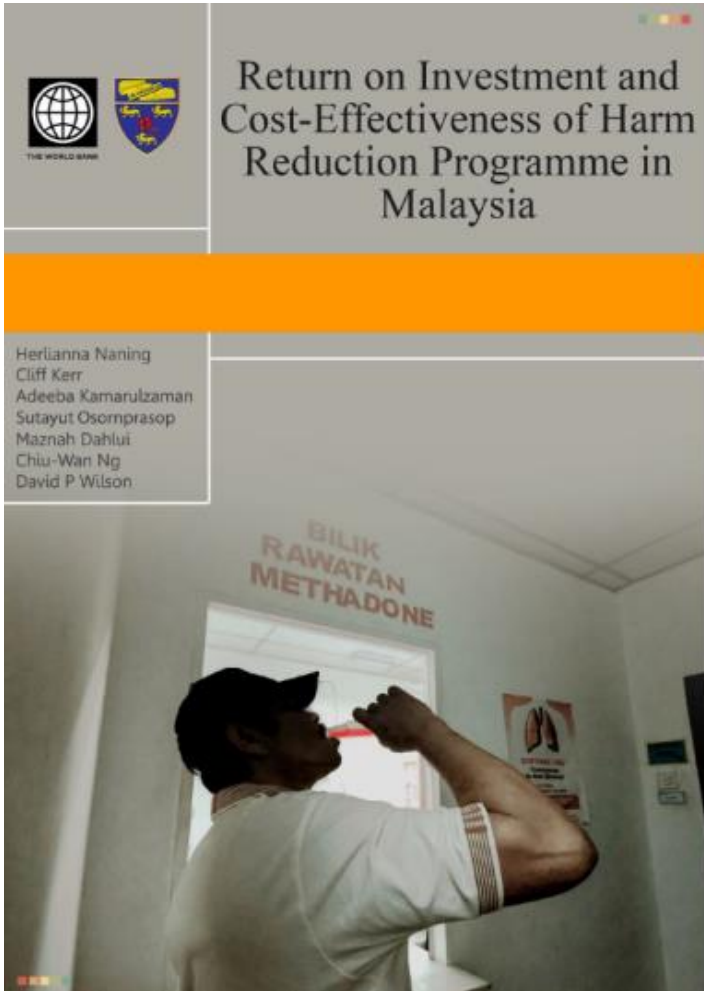
75.9% - Prevented arrest into prisons

Outcome - Failure of Incarceration-based rehabilitation



- Median **time to relapse** to opioid use post-release
 - PUSPEN participants **31 days**
 - C&C participants **352 days**
- C&C participants had an **81% decreased chance of opioid relapse** compared to PUSPEN

Success of Harm Reduction: Averting New HIV Infections

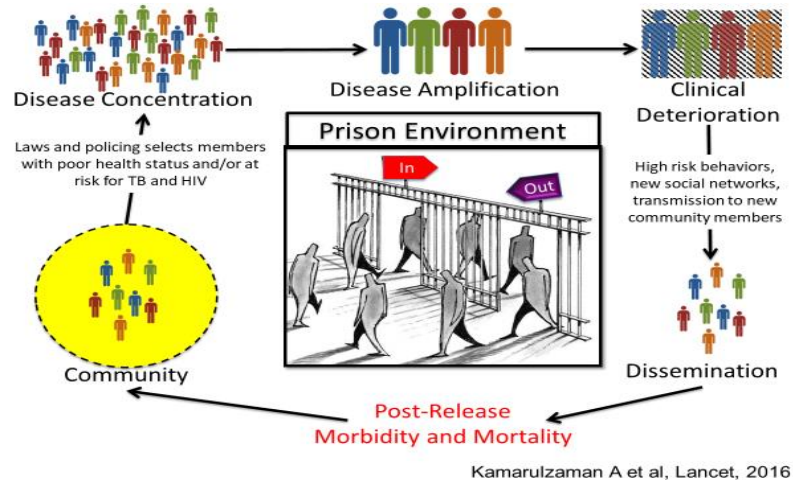


With Harm Reduction	Without Harm Reduction	Reduction in no of new HIV Infections
• 2006-2013		
20,903	34,220	39%
• 2013-2023		
3,596	27,118	87%
• 2006-2050		
27,979	134,345	79%

Cost Savings in Direct Health Care

Cost-saving in direct health care (mil. RM)		
2006 - 2013	2013 - 2023	2006 - 2050
47.06 (30.53 – 58.50)	209.53 (114.10 – 248.26)	909.47 (441.71 – 1182.40)

Punitive Drug laws: Severe prison overcrowding leads to infectious disease outbreaks



Over 51,000 prison inmates, personnel infected with Covid-19 since last year, says Deputy Home Minister

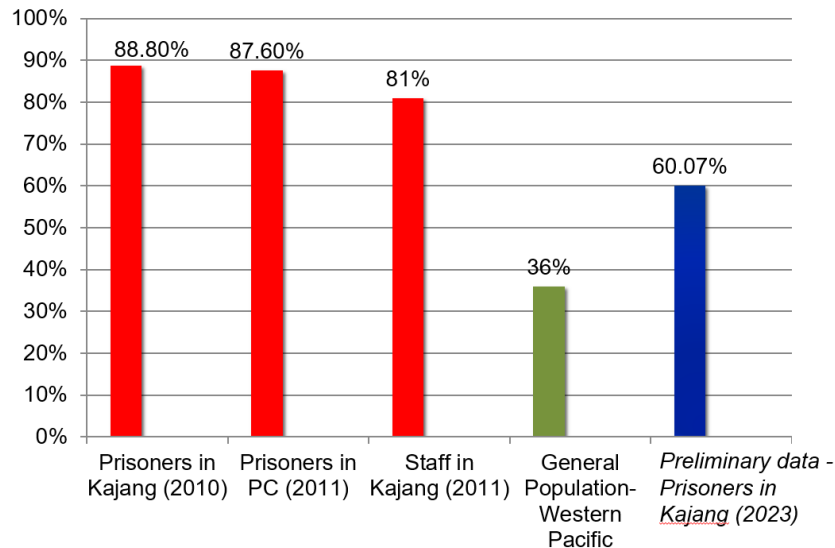
By TARRENCE TAN, RAHIMY RAHIM and MARTIN CARVALHO



NATION

Tuesday, 28 Sep 2021
12:58 PM MYT

KUALA LUMPUR: More than 51,000 individuals, including nine babies, consisting of prison inmates and staff have contracted Covid-19 since last year, the Dewan Rakyat was told.



7.79% active TB
amongst prisoners
(data as of 31Jan2023)

Building On Our our Success

Harm Reduction: The Malaysia
experience

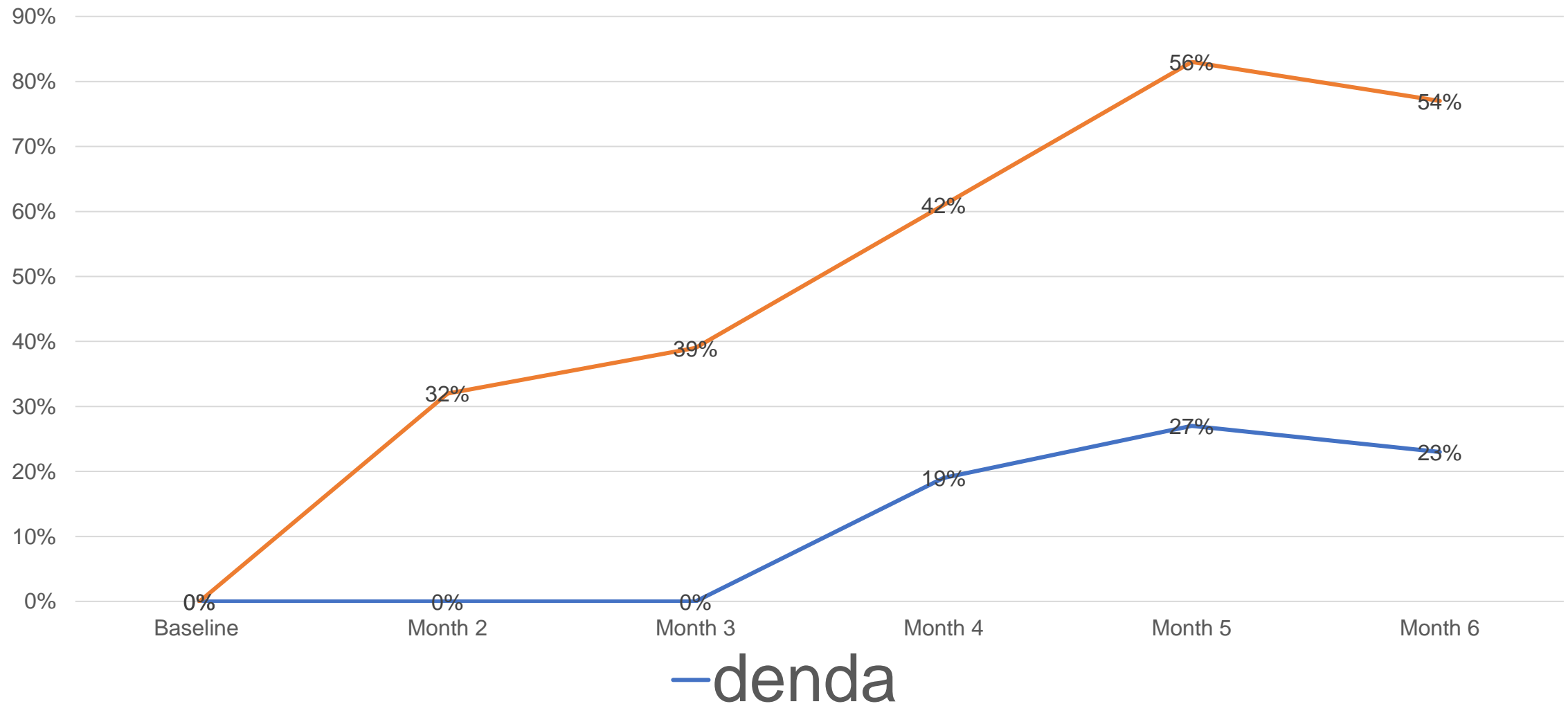
- Medication-assisted treatment (MAT)
- Needle Exchange Syringe Program (NSEP)



Cost Comparisons (per patient per year)

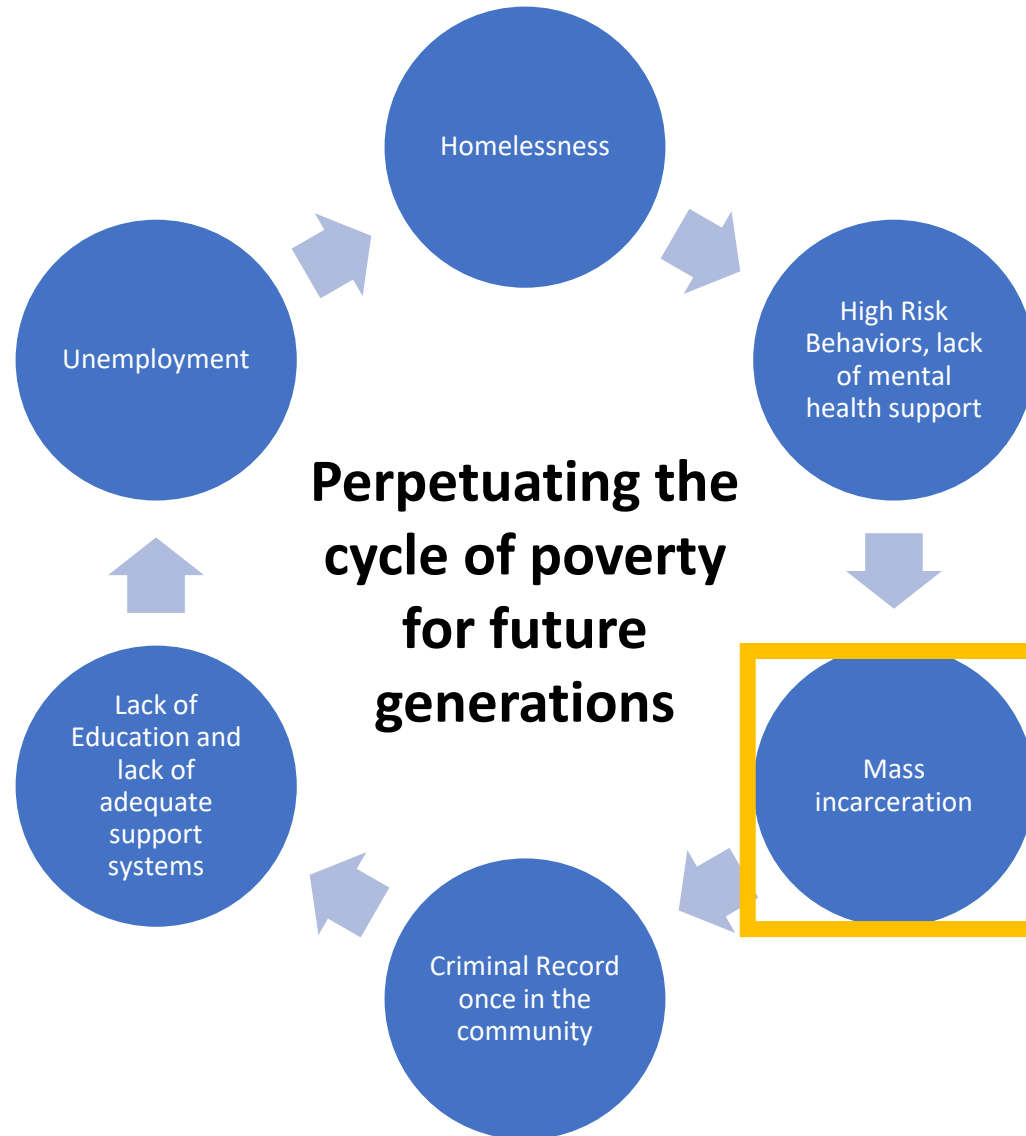
Option	First year (RM)
Prison	20,690
PUSPEN	38,530
Methadone (80mg) (Public)	6,560
Buprenorphine (8mg) (Private)	14,600
Court mandated community supervision and counselling	5,340

Relapse rates between release from prison and fined participants under Sec 15(1) Dangerous Drug Act 1952



Singh, D., Saref, N., Narayanan, S., Griffin, H. O., and Vicknasingam, B. (2020). Treatment Compliance among Incarcerated and Fined Amphetamine-Type-Stimulant (ATS) Users in a Community Supervision Programme in Malaysia: A Preliminary Study. *Journal of Substance Use*, 26(3), 240-249.

Cycle of poverty, impacts health of the nation



Whatever happens inside prisons and places of detention, find a way to impact the community

- COVID-19 outbreaks
- Latent and Active TB outbreaks
- Lack of adequate medical treatment (substance use treatment)
- High chronic disease, high bacterial skin diseases

ASIA - PACIFIC, LATEST ON CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

Malaysian prisons report 1,126 COVID-19 cases

To contain virus transmission, drug-related inmates moved to temporary prisons

Pizaro Gozali Idrus | 07.10.2020

The 1,126 prison-related positive cases, 39 are prison officers or staff.



Written by Vivienne Chew

Malaysia Reports 489 Covid-19 Cases, Penang Prison Cluster

By CodeBlue | 07 October 2020

Over half of total reported cases today were sporadic community cases in Sabah, whereas more than a quarter of today's cases belong to the Tembok cluster in Kedah.



News | Human Rights

Immigration detention centres become Malaysia coronavirus hotspot

Health ministry says detention centres 'high risk' areas after spike in cases following series of raids during lockdown.



Overcrowding behind rapid spread of Covid-19 in Malaysian prisons

By Dhesegaa Bala Krishnan - October 19, 2020 @ 11:53am



Why The Need for Drug Policy Reform

Negative Consequences of Current Drug Policy

1. Disruptive Impact on Youth
2. Disruptive Impact on Human Capital
3. Marginalization of the most vulnerable of society
4. Family breakdowns leading to poverty
5. Severe prison overcrowding
6. Disease outbreaks (COVID 19, Tuberculosis, Hepatitis C, HIV,)
7. An over-exhausted criminal justice system
8. Large financial burden to society

Endorsement from 31 UN Agencies

In March 2019, the United Nations Chief Executives Board (CEB), chaired by the UN Secretary General representing **31 UN agencies**, including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), unanimously adopted a common position on drug policy that **endorsed decriminalization of possession and use of drugs.**

The statement called on member states to **“promote alternatives to conviction and punishment in appropriate cases, including the decriminalization of drug possession for personal use.”**

UN System Common Position on drug-related matters

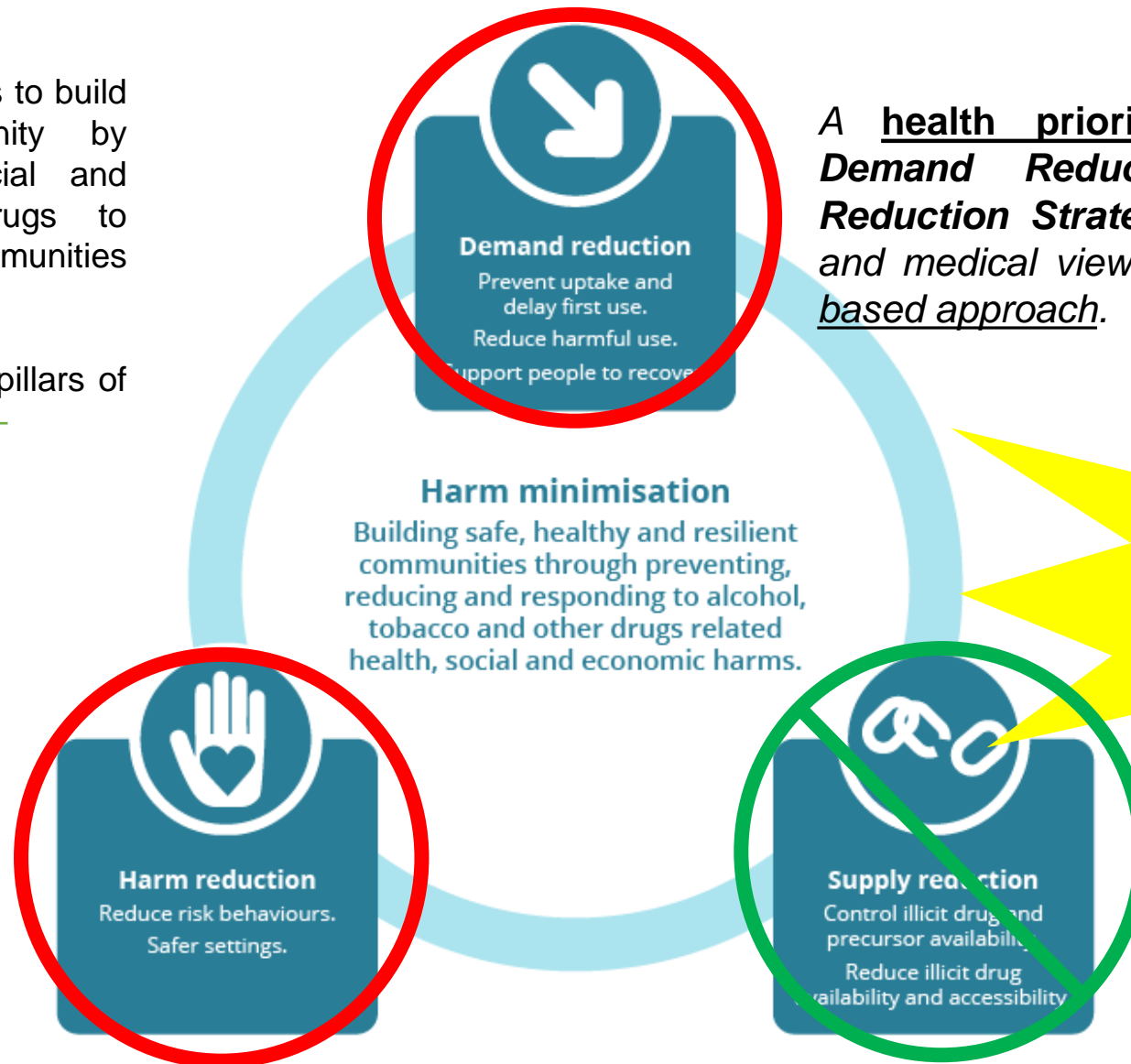
- Recognition that health and welfare of humankind are fundamental underpinnings of the conventions
 - Promote a rebalancing of drug policies and interventions **towards public health** approaches
 - **Increased investment of harm reduction** interventions to reduce new HIV infections and improve broader health outcomes in the community and in **prisons**
 - Call for **UHC** for people who use drugs and position drug dependence and other drug-related issues as health conditions that should be in the overall UHC framework and into national health packages
 - **Promote decriminalisation** of drug use and possession and change laws and policies and practices that threaten the health and human rights of people
 - **Reduce stigma and discrimination** and achieving UHC of evidence-based prevention, treatment and rehabilitation
 - Active **involvement of CSOs** and **improved data**
 - Improve **access to controlled medicines**.

National Drug Policy—is a health priority

National Drug Policy priority is to build a safe, healthy community by preventing the health, social and economic harms from drugs to individuals, their families, communities and society

Balanced approach across 3 pillars of harm minimization is needed—

- (a) supply reduction
- (b) demand reduction
- (c) harm reduction



A health priority re-examines the existing **Demand Reduction Strategy** and **Harm Reduction Strategy** from an economics, social and medical viewpoint—and inserts an evidence based approach.

Supply reduction which includes policies on tackling drug production, trafficking and organized crime will continue to be handled by the Police, Customs and other law enforcement agencies.

Note: supply offenses are also driven by poverty and social factors. Development, opportunities for social engagement and other livelihood opportunities play a key role and involve other agencies as well.

Liew: Focus on social health aspect of drug menace, not just punitive measures

NATION

Friday, 18 Jan 2019

10:59 AMMYT



By Loh Foon Fong



NEWS RELEASE

Mesyuarat Jawatankuasa Kabinet Membenters Gejala Dadah (JKDM) yang dipengerusikan oleh Timbalan Perdana Menteri Yang Amat Berhormat Dato' Seri Dr. Wan Azizah Binti Dr. Wan Ismail di Putrajaya pagi tadi telah membincangkan perkara-perkara yang telah dibangkitkan dalam mesyuarat JKDM sebelum ini. Mesyuarat berkenaan telah dihadiri oleh Menteri Dalam Negeri Yang Berhormat Tan Sri Dato' Haji Muhyiddin Yassin, Menteri Belia Dan Sukan Syed Saddiq Abdul Rahman, Menteri Undang-Undang Yang Berhormat Datuk Liew Vui Keong, Menteri Perpaduan Negara dan Integrasi Nasional Yang Berhormat Waythamoorthy Ponnusamy, selain Agensi Antidadah Kebangsaan dan Polis Diraja Malaysia (PDRM).

Datuk VK Liew mengemukakan pandangan bahawa penggunaan dadah haruslah lebih dilihat melalui sudut kesihatan sosial dan diselia melalui sektor kesihatan, dan bukanlah ditangani melalui sistem pengadilan jenayah.

Katanya, penggunaan dadah dan ketagihan adalah satu kesan biologi yang kompleks yang dipengaruhi oleh pelbagai faktor seperti kecenderungan genetik, faktor psikologi dan pengaruh persekitaran. Penguatkuasaan haruslah lebih tertumpu terhadap aktiviti penyeludupan bekalan dadah dan bukannya menumpukan kepada menghukum terhadap pengguna bahan berkenaan semata-mata.

Katanya lagi, dominasi pelaksanaan penguatkuasaan undang-undang dalam menentang penggunaan dadah secara haram bukan sahaja kurang berkesan, malah telah memburukan lagi tahap kesihatan individu terbabit selain turut melibatkan perbelanjaan wang yang besar oleh kerajaan.

KUALA LUMPUR: Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Law) Datuk Liew Vui Keong has proposed that the use of drugs should be examined more from the social health aspect, rather than the punitive aspect.

Liew said he had proposed this to the Cabinet Committee on Eradicating the Drug Menace (Jawatankuasa Kabinet Membenters Gejala Dadah) meeting chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail in Putrajaya on Thursday (Jan 17).



“increase accessibility to treatment and rehabilitation for people who use drugs within a comprehensive legal framework”

“the most important aspect [being] (health) treatment instead of (judicial) punishment.”

Saifuddin: M’sia to decriminalise minor drug offences to solve overcrowding in prisons

By TARRENCE TAN, RAHIMY RAHIM and MARTIN CARVALHO



NATION

Wednesday, 08 Mar 2023
1:12 PM MYT

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia is set to introduce a new law to decriminalise minor drug offences in a bid to solve the issue of overcrowding in prisons, says Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail.

**MALAYSIA
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News

New law on drug offences to cut overcrowding at prisons, says home minister

The Drug and Substance Abuse (Treatment and Rehabilitation) Act is expected to be tabled this year.

Bernama | March 8, 2023 2:36 PM | 1 minute read