

Rising concern over suicides

THE National Suicide Registry Malaysia (NSRM) recorded 731 suicide cases nationwide from 2007 to 2009.

Deputy Health Minister Datuk Rosnah Abd Rashid Shirlin said there were 113 cases in 2007, 290 in 2008 and 328 in 2009, which was a cause for concern.

She was replying to Chew Lee Giok who wanted to know the number of suicides cases, the percentage according to race and the measures taken to reduce suicide.

Rosnah said the Chinese accounted for about 40 per cent of the suicide cases in 2009, followed by Indians (21 per cent), Malays (13 per cent) and Bumiputeras in Sabah and Sarawak (four per cent).

In 2007, 73 per cent of the cases or 82 men committed suicide compared with women (31 cases); 219 men compared with 71 women the following year; and 244 men as against 84 women in 2009.

Rosnah said the ministry started collecting the data in 2007 through the registry which was established with the cooperation of the Kuala Lumpur Hospital and the Institute of Forensic Medicine.

Rosnah said the ministry had taken several prevention measures to promote mental health.

These include publishing pamphlets and posters, setting up web portals with information on mental health and preparing guidelines for media reporting on suicide cases in Malaysia.

"We also cooperate with organisations such as the World Health Organisation and the International Association for Suicide Prevention, and have developed a National Strategic and Ac-

FACTS & FIGURES

Suicide cases

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tion Plan on Suicide Prevention."

The ministry also provided psychiatry services in four mental institutions and 42 government hospitals nationwide.

Rosnah said the ministry did not plan to increase the number of counselling, shelter or treatment centres because there were sufficient such centres provided by the Women, Family and Community Development Ministry and non-governmental organisations such as the Befrienders.