

Addicts are **UNDETERRED**

By NAJIAH NAJIB

"ECSTASY dries up your brain and you will die faster."

You can tell that or even the goriest story to a drug addict but it doesn't keep them away from drugs.

The number of drug addicts in the country is on the rise and is becoming a major cause of concern.

Has Malaysia become a centre for international syndicates to distribute *syabu* and Ecstasy to our youths?

A syndicate was busted in July where RM14.4 million worth of *syabu* and Ecstasy pills were seized.

Why do youths take these designer drugs in the first place?

"Lack of teaching of good values by families, peer pressure and common sense," said Samuel Krishnan, the co-ordinator of Breakthrough Rehabilitation Centre in Section 17, Petaling Jaya.

Samuel has been working with addicts at the centre for three years and he concluded that youths who indulge in drugs normally

have some character and attitude problem.

He said in most cases, addicts aged 25 and above are able to recover in full after they have been rehabilitated.

"People within this age group acknowledge their responsibilities," said Samuel.

"All they need is a support pillar to back them up and force them out of the habit.

"Unfortunately, the same thing cannot be said for the younger ones.

"They feel that because they're young, there's still time to 'fix' themselves later. They say they want to enjoy their youth."

He said Ecstasy is the most dangerous drug a youth could become addicted to.

"Apart from being prone to insomnia like ice (*syabu*) addicts, Ecstasy addicts are also more prone to suicide."

Samuel said those who overdose on drugs are youths aged between 21 and 25 because they are in denial most of the time.

He said these youths would try to justify themselves with remarks of: 'I don't have a drug problem' or 'I'm in total control of myself'.

Although there are more males with drug and overdose problems, the females are

catching up fast.

"This could be because the guys would seek professional help while the girls tend to suppress their problems," Samuel said.

According to Pemadam, drug addiction starts at a young age.

Last year, there were 18,913 drug addicts aged between 16 and 34. They comprised 56 per cent of the total addicts in the country.

Most of them do not receive proper education and many are drop-outs with primary school education.

Those who failed to complete their secondary school education made up the highest numbers of addicts at 12,712 from the total 32,808 *dadah* users, who were categorised based on their education level.

What makes one use *dadah*? The statistics revealed that there are several factors.

Top of the list is peer influence followed by curiosity.

Other reasons include seeking pleasure and depression.

According to the statistics, 13,914 of the addicts are hooked on heroin while 8,047



SAMUEL Most addicts have character flaws

users are addicted to morphine.

In third place are ganja addicts with 5,044 users followed by *syabu* (methamphetamine) with 3,832 addicts.

About 395 addicts are hooked on Ecstasy and 382 are addicted to amphetamines.