

# Many new kidney patients are also diabetic

## Majority of cases can be blamed on unhealthy lifestyle

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**PETALING JAYA:** Almost 60% of over 5,800 new kidney patients who require dialysis or kidney transplants last year have diabetes.

The 20th Malaysian Dialysis and Transplant Registry 2012 said 11% suffered from hypertension, which is another non-communicable disease (NCD).

It said all the 5,829 new patients were diagnosed with end-stage kidney failure (ESRF) and more than three-quarters of the cases were lifestyle-related, which could be avoided or delayed if the patients had adopted healthier habits.

Health director-general Datuk Seri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said the percentage of diabetic cases rose from 20% in 1993 to 26% in 2003 before reaching a high of 58% last year.

"The rise is not only notable and serious but should cause an alarm," he told *The Star* via e-mail.

Dr Noor Hisham said there

could be cases of undiagnosed or untreated hypertension, which could have contributed to chronic kidney disease among the 25% of "unknown causes" of ESRF.

"Malaysia continues to be among the highest in the world in the percentage of patients with diabetes among dialysis patients.

"The costly socio-economic and challenging clinical factors, imposed by the needs of ESRF patients with diabetes, would force the health system to find practical ways to reduce the scourge," he said.

Dr Noor Hisham said these cases put a strain on the health budget as well as on the need for highly-trained nurses, technicians and kidney specialists to manage them.

National Kidney Foundation chairman Datuk Dr Zaki Morad Mohd Zaher said NCDs had become a significant cause of ESRF in the last 15 years.

"It takes 20 years for diabetes to destroy the kidneys. There is ample time for efforts to be taken to stop or delay the progression," he said.