

Malays more prone to eye cancer

T. S. → pg N10 29.1.07

Condition less prevalent in other ethnic groups

KOTA BARU: A study by the Human Genome Centre at Universiti Sains Malaysia's medical campus here has found that eye cancer is more prevalent among Malays compared with Chinese and Indians.

Centre director Dr Zilfalil Alwi said a 12-month study found that the Malays had a higher DNA variation that caused eye cancer.

"We are not saying all Malays can have the disease. But there is evidence that the DNA variation for eye cancer or retinoblastoma is more prevailing in Malays than other ethnic groups," he told a press conference here.

The study covered 36 infants and found 80% of the Malay infants showed the DNA variation of polymorphism.

Dr Zilfalil advised Malay parents to be more cautious with their children's eyesight, adding that testing equipment was available in most government hospitals and some private clinics.



Serious ailment: A boy with eye cancer being examined. (Inset) Dr Zilfalil advises Malay parents to be more cautious with their children's eyesight.

He advised parents to immediately get their children to undergo eye tests if they noticed red or white reflective spots near their eyes.

The Human Genome Centre conducts research on human genetics and life science. It has set up a DNA bank

and is now working on a long-term population genetics study to determine the original gene strain of Malays in the country.

Initial results so far have shown that Malays in the country have 14 sub-genetic groups.