

Published: Tuesday July 26, 2011 MYT 5:32:00 PM

70% of asylum seekers, refugees suffer from some mental illness: NGO

KUALA LUMPUR: Seventy percent of men and women asylum seekers and refugees in Malaysia suffer symptoms of anxiety, depression and stress due to human trafficking, forced labour and unemployment, according to a non-governmental organisation.

The figure was three times higher than in any normal population, said the [Dr Xavier Pereira](#), the director of Health Equity and Initiatives (HEI).

He said the finding was based on a study done in March on 1,074 asylum seekers and refugees, aged between 18 to 70 years.

"Both men and women are equally affected, especially those who are unemployed, involved in human trafficking and forced labour," he told reporters after the National Consultation of the Health Dimensions of Human Trafficking and Forced Labour, here on Tuesday.

He said that the study also showed that symptoms of extreme anxiety was more evident than both depression and stress.

He added that the level of anxiety among asylum seekers were higher than the refugees. -
Bernama