



Prof. Mohd Noh (3rd from right) with (from left) Datin Dr Noran Fauziah Yaakub, Elma, Dr Rosnah, Prof. Mohan and Frozan.

Peer counselling is effective: UMS

By Mary Chin

KOTA KINABALU: The peer counselling system has been found to be effective at least at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS).

UMS Vice-Chancellor Prof. Datuk Dr Mohd Noh Dalimin said 200 students from Years One to Three are involved in the system initiated by the university students more than a year ago.

He said students who face academic, family or personal problems find it easier to talk to peer-counsellors because they (students) live together, rather than convey their woes directly to the counsellor.

"Sometimes, minor problems can be solved even at peer level. We need something of that nature.

"Of course, it is difficult to get someone to talk about his or her problem. It will be very stressful if we face a problem for too long. Anybody who can bring relief in the beginning is already making things easier for you," he told *Daily Express* after officiating at the closing of the three-day 2005 Malaysian Psychology Conference.

Prof. Mohd Noh likened the peer counselling system to a

'clinic' where students concerned can seek first help from peer counsellors, who are trained, before they (students) are referred to the university counsellors, if necessary.

"Normally, peer counsellors will inform the official counsellor if somebody needs help."

On measures undertaken by the university authorities to assist students who may have psychological distress, Prof. Mohd Noh said one way was to increase the number of staff working as counsellors.

"While we have two qualified counsellors, the entire staff of the School of Psychology are also directly involved in counselling services. They play the role of pre-counsellors in assisting the official counsellors."

Prof. Mohd Noh congratulated the conference organising chairperson, Associate Professor Dr Rosnah Ismail and her team on their success in holding the event with international participation. Dr Rosnah introduced the Vice-Chancellor to foreign speakers such as Prof. Dr Jitendra Mohan from India, Frozan Esmati from Afghanistan and Elma Berisha from Kosova.