

Excessive boozing in Sabah — study

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By Jenne Lajun

KOTA KINABALU: Sabah communities consider alcohol to be part of their culture which is enjoyed at many cultural events.

A study conducted by Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) has shown that only about a third of people who drink in Sabah practise low risk drinking, said UMS

School of Medicine Dean Professor Dr Kamarudin Mudin during the Promote Healthy Lifestyle: Reduce Alcohol Harm seminar yesterday.

He said two thirds of drinkers binged on alcohol, which means they drink large amounts of alcohol in a single occasion, he said.

“People often binge on alcohol at events such as weddings and funerals and this puts them at high risk of developing health problems. Binge drinking causes problems such as heart attack, stroke and accident,” he said.

He said one in five car accidents in Malaysia is due to alcohol, mainly due to a drinking binge where people go out to drink and then drive home.

Binge drinking, he said, also has



Kamarudin

an effect on society as a whole, and is the main cause of domestic violence and fights.

In Malaysia, only 12 percent of people practice high risk drinking, he said.

“The amount of alcohol consumed per Malaysian drinker is very high. According to the World Health Organisation statistics, each Malaysian drinker drinks around 30 litres

of alcohol per year, in comparison to only about 10 litres consumed by people in Europe,” he said. He also said that many communities are concerned about the problems caused by alcohol and are trying to find a solution to tackle them.

“The WHO recognises that one of the best ways to tackle alcohol related harm is through community action, where passionate members of each community find solutions to reduce alcohol related problems in their own community,” he said.

Also present at the event were Dr Heng Aik Cheng representing Mercy Malaysia, chairperson for the Intervention Group for Alcohol Misuse Dr Helen Lasimbang, and IOGT International Executive Director Esbjorn Hornberg.