



● CAMPAIGN TO EDUCATE WOMEN ON FAMILY PLANNING

WOMEN URGED TO TAKE CHARGE OF CONTRACEPTION

By NAJIAH NAJIB

KUALA LUMPUR: "Yasmin Take Charge!" — this is the latest campaign by the Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society of Malaysia (OGSM) to educate women and their partners on family planning.

Launched at a hotel here yesterday, consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist Associate Professor Dr Jamiyah Hassan, said the campaign is to educate women not to place their lives in the hands of their physicians when it comes to using contraception.

"Women have to learn what and how they use contraception, especially those taken orally as they may have negative effects.

"Through this campaign, we hope to educate women on their right to choose which form of contraception is best for them, instead of just being handed to them by their physicians," said Dr Jamiyah, a past president of the society.

On family planning, OGSM president Dr Ravi Chandran said sex is given high priority in society but the planning of pregnancies, however, is not.

"Many unwanted pregnancies have led to social issues such as



From left: Jamiyah, Guth, Stock and Ravi during the mock cheque presentation

abandoned babies and maternal deaths due to dangerous abortions. Studies have shown that effective contraception can save lives," he said, adding that the campaign's effort is in line with the latest initiatives by the Women, Family and Community Development Ministry.

He said that 50 per cent of Malaysian women do not use contraceptives.

As such, the need for the cam-

paign is crucial.

Professor Dr Gunter Stock, a member of the executive board of directors of Schering AG, a leading pharmaceutical company, said the low acceptance of oral contraception in Asia may be due to lack of knowledge and misconceptions.

"Women in Malaysia should choose proven contraceptive methods to avoid the trauma and health risk of unwanted preg-

nancies and abortions," he said, listing oral contraception, condoms, sterilization and intrauterine devices as the various methods of contraception.

The launch ceremony ended with a cheque presentation of RM10,000 from Schering (Malaysia) managing director Dr Sebastian Guth to Ravi for the "Yasmin Fund", to support public education forums on Malaysian women's fertility and health.