

Zamboanga City Medical Center (ZCMC) has recorded so far, eight victims of firecracker explosions covering the period from December 21 to December 27, but this figure is still lower than the number of victims compared to previous years.

The massive campaign against buying buy and using prohibited firecrackers by the Department of Health has contributed to the tremendous decrease in firecracker cases which is common during the yuletide season, ZCMC Director Romeo Ong said.

However, an unconfirmed report disclosed at least six similar cases have also been reported at Zamboanga Central Sanitarium in Barangay Pasobolong.

Using the media, DOH is continuously launching its campaign dubbed as APIR (Aksyon Paputok Injury Reduction) which encourages local folks to practice the traditional way of welcoming the New Year by making noise even without using firecrackers or firing guns.

In 2009, 48 firecracker explosion victims landed in hospitals. The number went down to 39 in 2010 and it further decreased in 2011.

There were also cases of poisoning among children due to firecracker powder that had stick on their hands while playing, Dr. Ong disclosed.

He said that most of the victims were playing Piccolo, a kind of firecracker which is very attractive to children. It is one of the banned firecrackers.

In so far as cases of stray bullets are concerned, two cases were registered in 2011 and 5 in 2009. Luckily, no one has been reported this year since their close monitoring started last December 21, Ong said. — Jimmy Villaflores