

AIDS - New Zealand

INTRODUCTION

This, the sixth issue of AIDS - New Zealand, updates what is known about the occurrence of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) in New Zealand to 30 July 1990. These reports are produced quarterly by the Medical Research Council AIDS Epidemiology Group. This group is jointly funded by the Medical Research Council (soon to become Health Research Council) of New Zealand and the Department of Health.

AIDS IN NEW ZEALAND

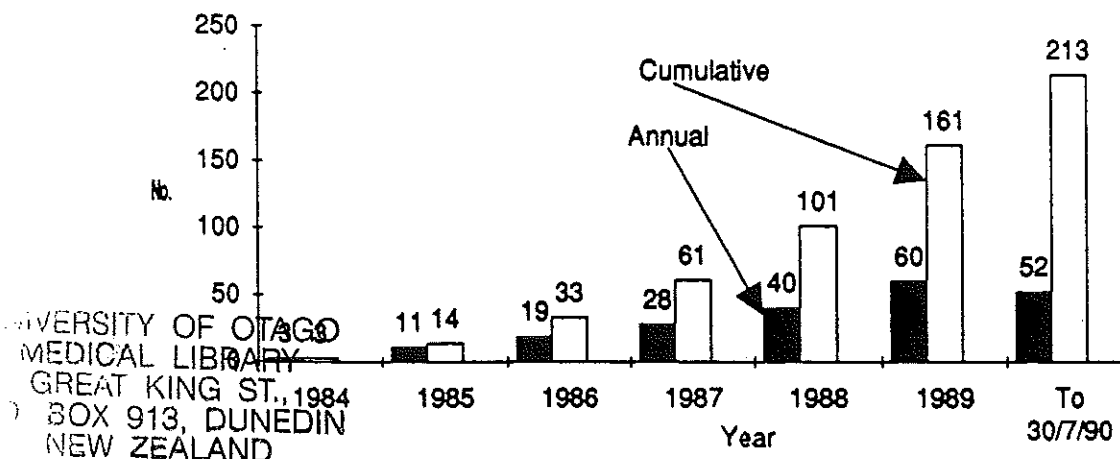
To July 30, 52 people have been notified as having AIDS in New Zealand in 1990. The total number of people reported as having AIDS since monitoring of the epidemic began late in 1983 is now 213.

Figure 1 depicts the

annual and cumulative totals of AIDS notifications since 1984 (the year when the first AIDS report occurred in New Zealand). There has been a small alteration in the total for 1989 compared with previous reports. Further information obtained about one AIDS notification indicated that it should have been included in the 1990 totals, not the 1989 totals. Therefore the number of people reported to have developed AIDS in 1989 is 60, not 61 as previous reports have indicated. The total of 52 for 1990 includes this person previously notified in 1989. This change serves to illustrate the dynamic nature of the monitoring of this epidemic. Revisions will continue to be required as further information updates what is already known.

Based on the observed number of notifications of

Figure 1 - AIDS NOTIFICATIONS IN NEW ZEALAND



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AIDS received so far in 1990, it is likely that a previous projection (see Issue 4 of AIDS New Zealand) of 89 new reports of people developing AIDS in 1990 will be reasonably accurate. Work is currently proceeding on short term projections for the number of cases expected in New Zealand to approximately the end of 1993. The existing methods of projection do not allow useful forecasting beyond this time frame.

RISK BEHAVIOUR CATEGORIES

The risk behaviour categories which have been observed among people with AIDS in New Zealand are shown in Table 1. For comparison the most likely modes of transmission of HIV to people with confirmed positive HIV antibody positive tests are also shown. Further

information about HIV antibody test results is presented later in this report.

SEX AND AGE DISTRIBUTION OF PEOPLE WITH AIDS

Of the 213 people with AIDS in New Zealand, six are female and 207 are male. There are no new trends in age at time of notification. All of the people reported as having AIDS in New Zealand so far in 1990 have been adults.

OUTCOMES

With the introduction of the use of zidovudine (also known as azidothymidine, AZT or Retrovir) and with improved preventive measures for the prevention and treatment of the complications of AIDS, such as Pneumocystis carinii

Table 1 - Most likely mode of HIV transmission: Among people with AIDS and among people with confirmed HIV-positive tests

Most likely mode of transmission:	People with AIDS:		HIV-Antibody Positive Tests	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Homo/bisexual	183	85.9	317	55.0
Homosexual & IVDU	3	1.4	8	1.4
Intravenous drug user	2	0.9	11	1.9
Heterosexual contact	9	4.2	11	1.9
Haemophilic	3	1.4	31	5.4
Transfusion-related	2	0.9	14	2.4
Perinatal	1	0.5	0	0.0
Unknown	10	4.7	184	31.9
TOTAL	213	100.0	576	100.0

Percentage columns may not sum to 100.0 because of rounding.

pneumonia, the median survival of people diagnosed with AIDS has improved. Although much longer survival times have been observed, median survival remains less than two years from diagnosis.

As at 30 July 1990, the number of known deaths among people with AIDS in New Zealand was 128. Eight notifications of deaths have been received by the AIDS Epidemiology Group since the last report. The outcomes by year of notification for people with AIDS in New Zealand is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 - Outcomes by Year of Notification

Year:	Number:		
	Alive	Dead	LTF*
1984	0	3	0
1985	0	10	1
1986	0	12	7
1987	2	25	1
1988	7	30	3
1989	29	31	0
1990	35	17	0
TOTAL	73	128	12

*LTF = Lost to follow-up, usually because moved overseas

An error was contained in Table 2 in some copies of the May 1990 issue of AIDS New Zealand. The number of deaths at that time should have read 120 (not 128) and the number

of deaths among those notified in 1990 was 13 (not 21 as shown in some copies).

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

Greater detail regarding geographical distribution is presented in this issue (see Table 3).

Table 3 - Regional Distribution

	No. of AIDS Reports	Cumul. Rate per 100,000 popn.
Nth NI Prov	16	2.3
Auckland	123	13.5
Sth NI Prov	13	2.8
Wellington	45	11.6
Canterbury	12	2.8
Other Sth Is	4	1.0
NEW ZEALAND	213	6.5

Northern NI Provincial includes Northland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty and Tairāwhiti Area Health Board regions
Southern NI Provincial includes Taranaki, Manawatu/Wanganui and Hawkes Bay regions

Separate totals are now presented for the Canterbury Area Health Board region and the North Island outside of Auckland and Wellington is split into northern and

southern provincial areas. The population base for the rates shown are the 1989 estimates of populations for each of the Area Health Board regions. For reasons of confidentiality, the total number of notifications from an individual Area Health Board will generally not be published until the total number of cases reported reaches 10. In addition to protection of confidentiality, the statistical fluctuations associated with very small numbers would make attempts at interpretation of such data largely meaningless.

INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

Table 4 shows the cumulative AIDS notification rates for New Zealand and several other developed Western countries. These should be considered a rough guideline only. Despite the impression that the countries shown should be comparable there are differences in reporting practices, reporting delays, completeness of reporting, diagnostic practices and access to medical care and other resource considerations which may invalidate comparisons. However, the presentation of these data confirms that although less affected than some other developed countries, New Zealand's experience of the HIV/AIDS epidemic continues to be very similar to that of the United Kingdom and some other Western European countries.

Table 4 - International Comparisons

Country:	No.	Rate
United States		
of America	126127	52.5
France	9718	17.7
Canada	3735	14.5
Spain	5295	13.7
Australia	1789	11.3
Italy	6068	10.6
Netherlands	1189	8.2
West Germany	4653	7.7
Belgium	651	6.6
New Zealand	195	5.9
United Kingdom	3157	5.6
Austria	415	5.5
Sweden	406	4.9
Ireland	142	3.9

No. refers to number of people reported as having AIDS to end of March 1990. Rate is the cumulative notification rate per 100,000 population [based on WHO population data (1987)]

HIV ANTIBODY POSITIVE TEST RESULTS

As at 30 June 1990, there had been 576 confirmed positive HIV antibody test results recorded in New Zealand. In 527 the blood sample was from a male, in 26 instances from a female, and in 23 the gender was unknown. Because testing may be done under codes or pseudonyms some of these results will be duplicate positive tests for the same individual.