

# AIDS - New Zealand

## INTRODUCTION

This, the twenty-third issue of 'AIDS - New Zealand', provides information about the occurrence of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection in New Zealand to 30 September 1994.

These reports are produced quarterly by the AIDS Epidemiology Group, which is funded by the Public Health Commission. We aim to give timely and relevant details about the problem of HIV/AIDS in New Zealand and elsewhere.

This issue coincides with  
World AIDS Day

1st December 1994

## AIDS IN NEW ZEALAND

Ten people were notified as having AIDS in the third quarter of 1994. All were male. The total number notified since monitoring began to 30 September 1994, was 461. The cumulative incidence rate to that time was 13.7 per 100,000 total population.

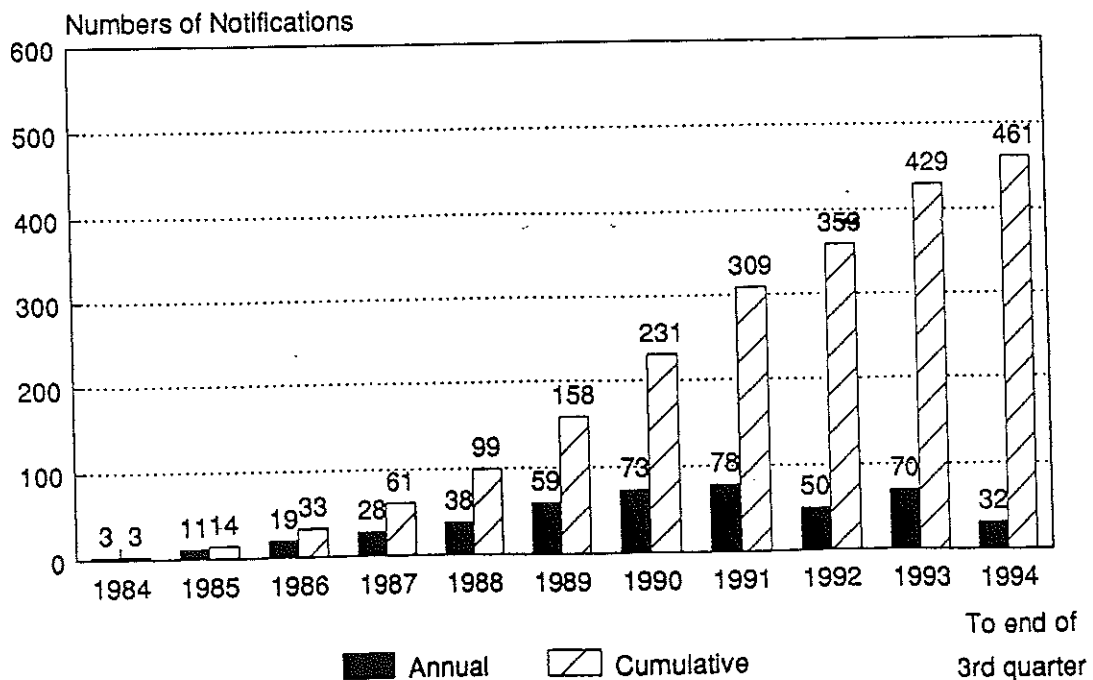


Figure 1 AIDS notifications in New Zealand

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Figure 1 (previous page) shows the annual and cumulative numbers of notifications since 1984.

The year relates to that of notification, which does not always correspond to the year of diagnosis, due to delays in reporting.

#### Risk behaviour categories of people with AIDS

Of the 10 people notified with AIDS in the third quarter of 1994, all of whom were male, eight were reported to have had sexual contact with other men, one was reported to have been an injecting drug user, and one was reported to have been heterosexually infected.

Table 1 shows the likely risk behaviour categories of the people notified with AIDS (and those diagnosed as being infected with HIV) for the twelve months to the end of September 1994, and in total to that date.

#### PEOPLE FOUND TO BE INFECTED WITH HIV IN NEW ZEALAND

In the third quarter of 1994, 18 people were newly found to be infected with HIV. Of these 18, 15 were male, and 3 were female.

As seen in Table 1, 87 people were found to be infected with HIV in the 12 month period to the end of September 1994, and 971 in total to that date.

Table 1 Category of risk behaviour by date of notification of people with AIDS, and those identified as HIV antibody positive

	AIDS		Total to 30.9.94	HIV antibody positive*				
	12 Months to 30.9.94			12 Months to 30.9.94		Total to 30.9.94		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Homosexual or bisexual+	45	90.0	387	83.9	48	55.2	559	57.6
Homosexual & IDU+	0	0	9	2.0	0	0	10	1.0
Injecting drug user (IDU)								
Male	1	2.0	8	1.7	3	3.5	23	2.4
Female	0	0	3	0.7	1	1.1	6	0.6
Blood product recipient+	0	0	6	1.3	0	0	28	2.9
Transfusion related								
Male	0	0	1	0.2	0	0	2	0.2
Female	0	0	1	0.2	0	0	5	0.5
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0.5
Heterosexual								
Male	1	2.0	15	3.3	5	5.7	19	2.0
Female	1	2.0	14	3.0	17	19.4	44	4.5
Perinatal								
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.1
Female	0	0	1	0.2	0	0	1	0.1
Not stated or unknown								
Male	2	4.0	16	3.5	8	9.2	241	24.9
Female	0	0	0	0	2	2.3	15	1.5
Unknown	0	0	0	0	3	3.4	12	1.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>971</b>	<b>100.0</b>

+ All male

\* Includes people who have developed AIDS

It is important to appreciate that the number of people found to be infected during a 12 month period should not be interpreted as the number who were actually infected during that time.

As always care must be taken in interpreting the HIV antibody data. Not all people at risk will have been tested, and testing may not be requested until many years after infection has occurred.

**Risk behaviour categories of people found to be infected with HIV**

Of the 15 men found to be infected with HIV in the third quarter of 1994, all were reported to have had sex with other men.

Of the 3 women found to be infected, information is available on 2. Both of these 2 women were reported to have been heterosexually infected in, or to have come from, a part of the world where heterosexual transmission is common. Further information is awaited on the remaining woman.

**OUTCOME**

The outcome of the 461 people notified as having AIDS by 30 September 1994, as reported to us at the beginning of November 1994, is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2 Outcome of people with AIDS**

Alive	78
Known to have died	366
Lost to follow up	3
Overseas	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>461</b>

**ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION OF PEOPLE WITH AIDS**

Table 3 shows the ethnic groups of people with AIDS. Ethnicity is not reported on people reported to be HIV antibody positive.

**Table 3 Ethnic groups of people notified with AIDS to 30 September 1994**

	No.	%
European/Pakeha	379	82.2
Maori	52	11.3
Pacific Islander	11	2.4
Other	12	2.6
Unknown	7	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**AGE AND SEX OF PEOPLE WITH AIDS**

Table 4 shows the sex, and age at diagnosis, of those people notified with AIDS. AIDS has been notified most frequently from men in the age group 30-39yr.

It is important to appreciate that infection with HIV could have occurred many years before the development of AIDS.

**Table 4 Age and sex of people notified with AIDS to 30 September 1994**

Age (yrs)	Male	Female	Total
0-9	1	2	3
10-19	3	0	3
20-29	75	6	81
30-39	179	5	184
40-49	128	4	132
50-59	45	2	47
60 or more	11	0	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>442</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>461</b>

## Condoms and heterosexual transmission of HIV

A major factor in the heterosexual spread of HIV infection depends on the probability of transmission of the virus during sexual intercourse. Since the early days of the HIV/AIDS epidemic condoms have been advocated as a way of reducing this risk, but exactly how effective they are was not known.

A recently published study (New England Journal of Medicine, August 11 1994) carried out in 8 European countries addressed this question by following a group of heterosexual couples, one of whom was initially infected with HIV. The couples were seen every 6 months when they were interviewed, tested for HIV, and counselled about sexual practices according to policies at the local centre.

Of the 256 couples followed who continued to have sexual relations, 11 did not provide information on condom use. Of the remainder the male partners was initially infected in 64% of couples, and the female in 36%.

The use of condoms for every episode of intercourse during the period of follow up was reported by about half of the couples who provided information

on this. About a quarter of the couples used condoms for at least half of their sexual contacts, and the remaining quarter never or rarely reported their use.

Infection with HIV occurred in 12 of the 256 partners followed, 8 women and 4 men. All of these infections occurred among the couples (121) who did not report using condoms consistently. In this group approximately 5% of partners were infected every year.

No infection occurred among the 124 couples who used condoms for all vaginal or anal contact, even though approximately 15,000 protected sexual contacts occurred during the period of the study. The numbers and time of follow up could not exclude a small risk of HIV transmission occurring even with consistent condom use.

In fact two other recent studies of couples where one was HIV positive found that about 1% of partners were infected each year among couples who consistently used condoms, compared to about 10% among inconsistent users.

The results of these studies all show that latex condoms are highly effective in reducing the risk of HIV infection and other STDs when used consistently and correctly.

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