

AIDS - New Zealand

INTRODUCTION

This, the twenty-second 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 June 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.

AIDS IN NEW ZEALAND

Twelve people were notified as having AIDS in the second quarter of 1994. All were male. The total number notified since monitoring began to 30 June 1994, was 451. The cumulative incidence rate to that time was 13.4 per 100,000 total population.

Figure 1 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

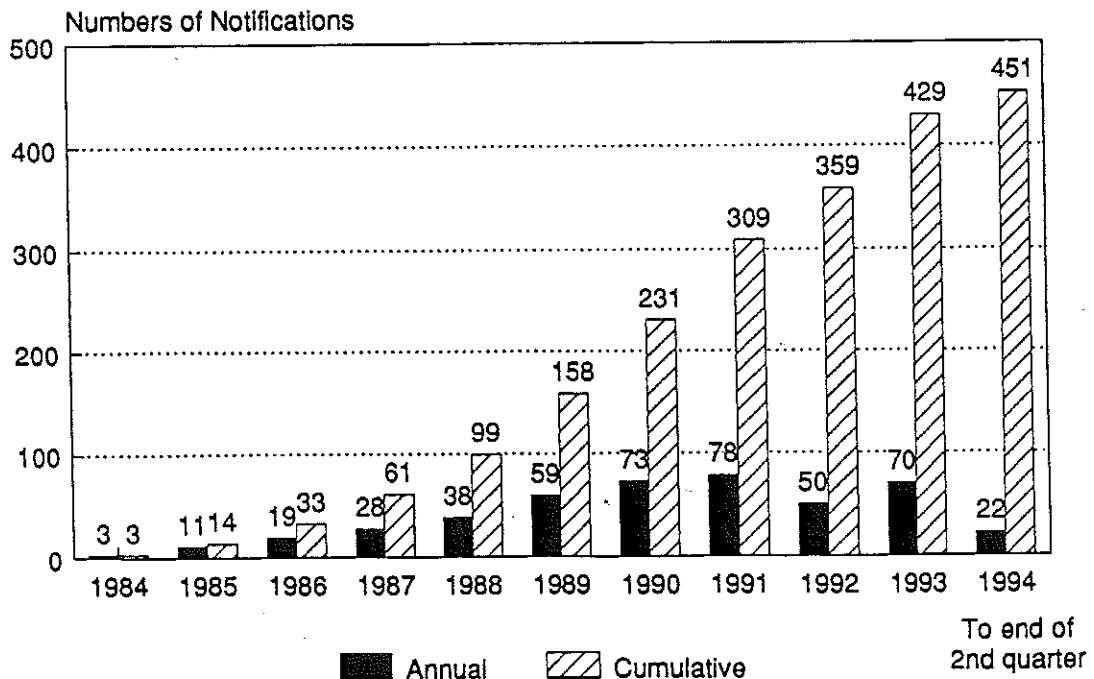


Figure 1 AIDS notifications in New Zealand

diagnosis, due to delays in reporting.

Figure 2 shows the year of diagnosis, from 1983 to 1993, as well as that of notification, of those people notified to the end of June 1994.

It is likely that the number diagnosed in 1993 or earlier will increase due to some delayed notifications. However, the pattern seen, of a levelling off in the number of people diagnosed with AIDS since 1989, is unlikely to be altered. Such a pattern has been observed in several countries which have had an epidemic of AIDS affecting similar groups in their population.

Risk behaviour categories of people with AIDS

All of the 12 people notified with AIDS in the second quarter of 1994 were men who reported having sex with other men.

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 June 1994, and in total to that date.

PEOPLE FOUND TO BE INFECTED WITH HIV IN NEW ZEALAND

In the second quarter of 1994, 22 people were newly found to be infected with HIV. Of these 22, 16 were male, 5 were female, and the sex of the remaining person was not stated.

As seen in Table 1, 89 people were found to be infected with HIV in the 12 month period to the end of June 1994, and 953 in total to that date.

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.

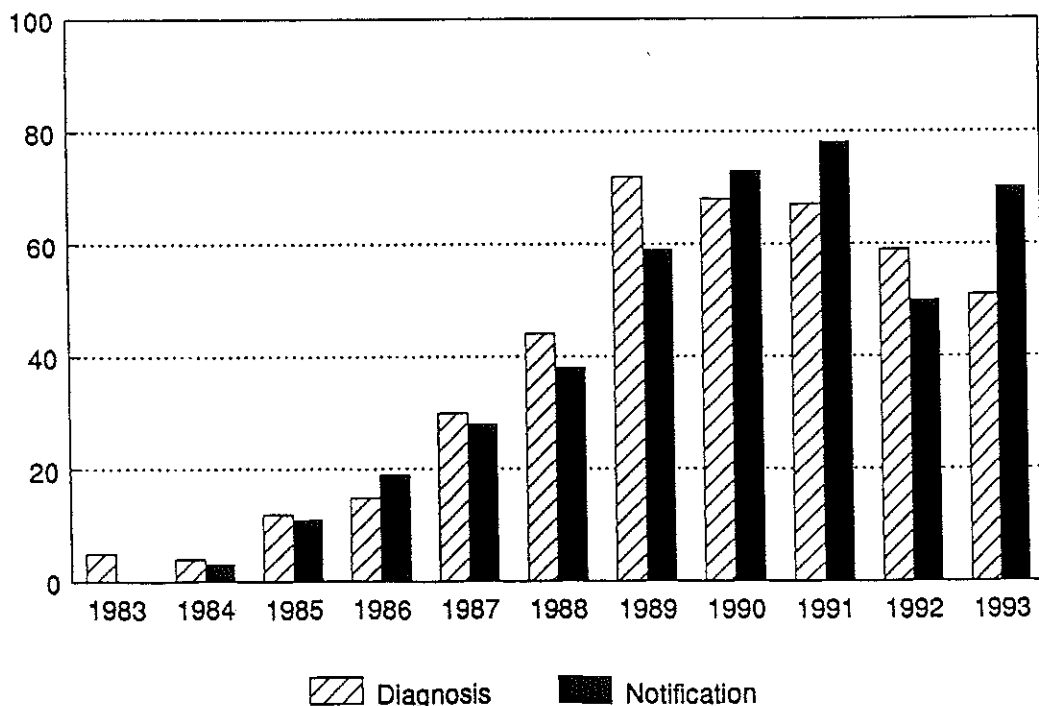


Figure 2 Number of people with AIDS by year of diagnosis and notification. No date of diagnosis is available for 10 people notified with AIDS

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

	AIDS		Total to		HIV antibody positive*			
	12 Months to 30.6.94		30.6.94		12 Months to 30.6.94		Total to 30.6.94	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Homosexual or bisexual+	53	88.3	379	84.0	49	55.1	547	57.4
Homosexual & IDU+	0	0	9	2.0	0	0	10	1.0
Injecting drug user (IDU)								
Male	1	1.7	7	1.6	5	5.6	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	0	0	14	3.1	5	5.6	19	2.0
Female	2	3.3	14	3.1	18	20.2	43	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	4	6.7	16	3.5	8	9.0	238	25.0
Female	0	0	0	0	1	1.1	13	1.4
Unknown	0	0	0	0	2	2.2	12	1.3
TOTAL	60	100.0	451	100.0	89	100.0	953	100.0

+ All male

* Includes people who have developed AIDS

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 16 men found to be infected with HIV in the second quarter of 1994, 11 were reported to have had sex with men, one to have been heterosexually infected, and one to have been an injecting drug user infected through the sharing of injecting equipment. Further information is awaited on 3 of the men.

Of the 5 women found to be infected, 3 were reported to have been infected in, or to

have come from, a part of the world where heterosexual transmission is common, one was an injecting drug user, and further information is awaited on the remaining woman.

OUTCOME

The outcome for the 451 people notified as having AIDS by 30 June 1994, as known to us at the beginning of August 1994, is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Outcome of people with AIDS

Alive	75
Known to have died	359
Lost to follow up	3
Overseas	14
Total	451

HIV/AIDS IN THE WESTERN PACIFIC REGION

The World Health Organization (WHO) monitors the epidemic of HIV/AIDS throughout the world. New Zealand is included in the WHO's Western Pacific Region, which in addition comprises Australia, other Pacific countries, China, Japan, and certain other countries in South East Asia (but not Thailand).

The WHO regional office has recently produced an update on the epidemic in this region (AIDS Surveillance Report, WHO Western Pacific Region, January 1994).

People have been diagnosed with AIDS, or found to be infected with HIV, in 26 of the 33 countries of the region.

At the time of the report nearly 8,000 people had been reported to have developed AIDS in the region, and over 31,000 had been found to be infected with HIV. The pattern of the epidemic is very disparate among countries in this part of the world.

Whereas for Australia and New Zealand approximately 85% of the people with AIDS have been men who have had sex with men, a different pattern is seen in many other countries. For example, in Malaysia nearly half of the cases have been reported among injecting drug users, and heterosexual transmission is the commonest means of infection in

the Philippines, Papua New Guinea and Korea.

The report also highlights the very serious emerging epidemic of HIV among injecting drug users in some countries. In southern Viet Nam, among attenders at one drug rehabilitation clinic in Ho Chi Minh City, the prevalence of HIV infection was found to rise from less than 5% to over 40% between January and May 1993.

Although by the end of 1993 few infections had been detected among commercial sex workers or patients attending sexually transmitted disease clinics in Ho Chi Minh City, in some provinces of the country such groups have been found to be affected.

In Viet Nam more than 20 times as many people are known to be HIV positive as have been notified with AIDS. This indicates the epidemic is in its early stages there.

Rapid increases in the number of people found to be infected were also noted last year in other parts of the region particularly Cambodia, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Macau.

This information complements the information on other parts of Asia, in particular Thailand and India, which indicates a rapidly progressing epidemic in certain areas in Asia and the Western Pacific.

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