

AIDS - New Zealand

INTRODUCTION

This, the fifteenth issue of 'AIDS - New Zealand', provides information about the occurrence of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) in New Zealand to 30 September 1992. These reports are produced quarterly by the AIDS Epidemiology Group, which is jointly funded by the Health Research Council of New Zealand and the Department of Health. We aim to give timely and relevant details about the problem of HIV/AIDS in New Zealand. Not all tables and figures will be updated in every issue.

AIDS IN NEW ZEALAND

Thirteen people were notified as having AIDS in the third quarter of 1992. Twelve were male, and one female. The total number notified since monitoring began was 348 on 30 September 1992.

Figure 1 depicts the annual and cumulative numbers of notifications since 1984.

The numbers relate to the year in which we were notified of a person having AIDS, which does not always correspond to the year of diagnosis.

Notifications received during

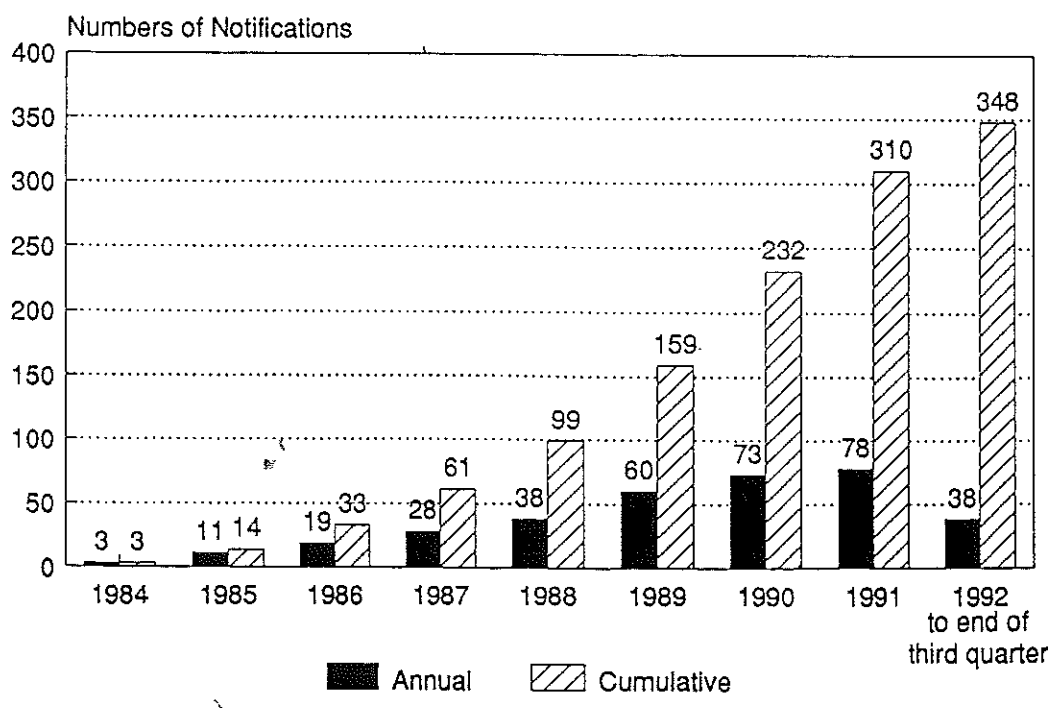


Figure 1 AIDS notifications in New Zealand

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the last three months have continued at a similar level to those of the previous three quarters, when we were informed of 13, 12, and 13 people with AIDS, respectively. Although this could be due to an encouraging trend with fewer people developing AIDS, we are taking active measures to check that all people who are recognised as having AIDS have been notified to us.

Of the 12 men notified in the last quarter, all but one were reported to have been infected through sex with other men. The remaining man was reported as being heterosexually infected. The one female was an injecting drug user.

HIV POSITIVE TESTS

In the three months to 30 September 1992, 33 people

were found to be infected with HIV. Of these 33, 30 were male, one female, and the gender of two people was not stated. The total number found to be infected in New Zealand to the end of September 1992 was 796.

Care must be taken in interpreting the HIV antibody data, as it is certain that not everyone at risk will have been tested.

RISK BEHAVIOUR CATEGORIES

The risk behaviours most likely to have resulted in HIV transmission in people notified as having AIDS, and in those who were found to be infected with HIV, during the 12 months to 30 September 1992, and in total to that date, are shown in Table 1. The gender of these people is also presented.

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

	<u>AIDS</u>		Total to		<u>HIV antibody positive</u>			
	12 Months to 30.9.92		30.9.92		12 Months to 30.9.92		Total to 30.9.92	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Homo/bisexual	43	86.0	297	85.3	80	69.0	458	57.5
Homosexual & IDU*	2	4.0	7	2.0	0	0	7	0.9
IDU*								
Male	0	0	5	1.4	3	2.6	16	2.0
Female	2	4.0	3	0.9	3	2.6	5	0.6
Haemophilic	0	0	4	1.2	0	0	31	3.9
Transfusion Related								
Male	0	0	1	0.3	0	0	2	0.3
Female	0	0	1	0.3	0	0	5	0.6
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0.6
Heterosexual								
Male	2	4.0	11	3.2	2	1.7	9	1.1
Female	0	0	6	1.7	3	2.6	18	2.3
Perinatal								
Male	0	0	0	0	1	0.9	1	0.1
Female	0	0	1	0.3	0	0	1	0.1
Unknown/Not stated								
Male	1	2.0%	12	3.5	20	17.2	217	27.3
Female	0	0	0	0	3	2.6	12	1.5
Unknown	0	0	0	0	1	0.9	9	1.1
TOTAL	50	100.0	348	100.0	116	100.0	796	100.0

*IDU - Injecting drug user

AIDS and HIV infection continue to be reported most frequently among men who have had sex with men.

The information on HIV positive results is provided to laboratories performing the confirmatory testing. The high number of people where the risk behaviour is 'unknown/not stated' reflects the lack of such information provided with the test request. It is probable that for most in this group the likely means of transmission was not in fact 'unknown' but simply 'not stated' on the request for HIV testing. To minimise the number in this group it is important that information on likely means of transmission is included on the request form.

OUTCOME

The outcome for the 348 people notified as having AIDS by 30 September 1992, as known to us at the time of publication, is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Outcome of people with AIDS

Alive	64
Known to have died	270
Lost to follow up	3
Overseas	11
Total	348

ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION OF PEOPLE WITH AIDS

Table 3 shows the ethnic groups of people with AIDS. When the age distribution of the various ethnic groups is taken into consideration, AIDS is not found to be significantly more common in any one group.

Ethnicity is not recorded for the people reported as being HIV antibody positive.

Table 3 Ethnic groups of people notified with AIDS to 30 September 1992

	No.	%
European/Pakeha	289	83.0
Maori	37	10.6
Pacific Islander	6	1.7
Other	9	2.6
Unknown	7	2.0
Total	348	100.0

AGE AND GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF PEOPLE WITH AIDS

The age and gender specific cumulative incidence rates to 30 September 1992 are shown in Figure 2 (overleaf).

CLINICAL INDICATORS OF AIDS

AIDS is defined by the presence of certain 'clinical indicators' or 'AIDS-defining conditions' in someone who is infected with the HIV virus.

Most of these are infections which generally occur only in people with reduced immunity (referred to as opportunistic infections) and certain forms of cancer. Since 1987 the definition used for surveillance of AIDS has also included 'HIV encephalopathy', a condition that causes dementia associated with HIV infection, and 'HIV wasting syndrome' - profound weight loss in the absence of other explanations. Table 4 shows the distribution of clinical indicators reported in New Zealand.

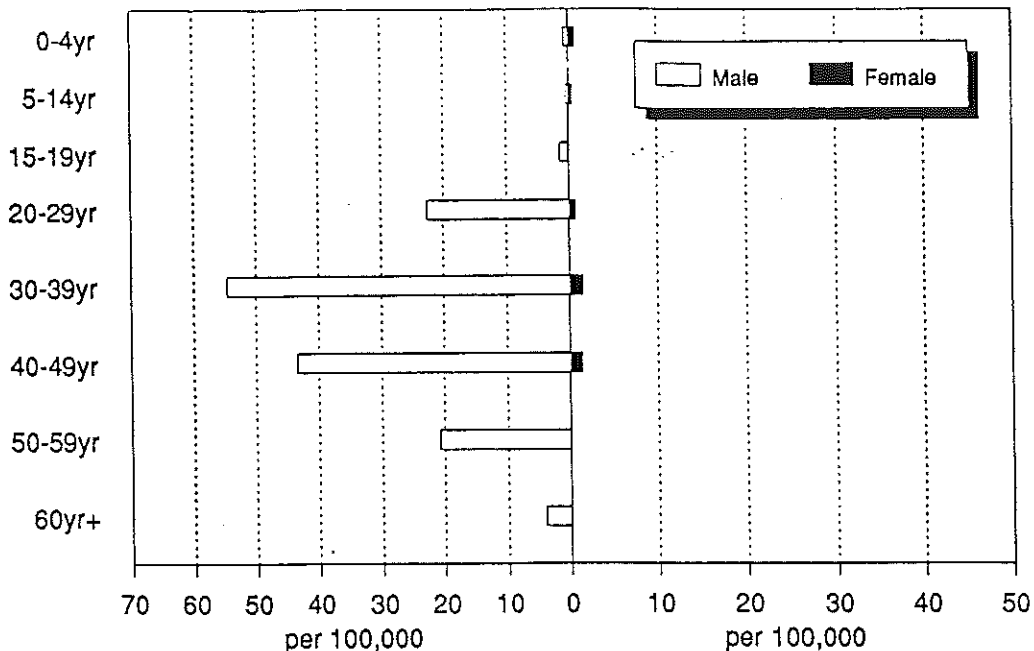


Figure 2 Age and sex specific cumulative incidence rates of people notified with AIDS

INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

Table 5 shows the comparative rates for the USA, Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom. The rates are derived from the number of people notified as having AIDS to the date given, and the total population of the country in 1988 (except New Zealand where the population used to derive the rate is from the 1986 and 1991 censuses). The New Zealand rate to the end of March 1992 is shown to allow appropriate comparison.

Table 4 Clinical Indicators of AIDS at diagnosis

	No.	%
Opportunistic Inf.	246	70.7
Opp. Inf. and other	17	4.9
Kaposi's sarcoma (KS)	25	7.2
KS and Opp. Inf.	15	4.3
HIV encephalopathy	14	4.0
HIV wasting syndrome	16	4.6
Lymphoma	8	2.3
Other	7	2.0
Total	348	100.0

Table 5 International comparison of cumulative rates of notified cases of AIDS

	Reporting date	No. of cases	Cumulative rate
United States	31.3.92	218301	88.7/100,000
Canada	31.3.92	6116	23.4/100,000
Australia	30.4.92	3238	19.9/100,000
United Kingdom	30.12.91	5451	9.6/100,000
New Zealand	31.3.92	323	9.8/100,000

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