
AIDS - New Zealand

INTRODUCTION

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

AIDS IN NEW ZEALAND

To October 30, 65 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 to is 226.

Figure 1 (page 2) depicts the quarterly number of AIDS notifications since 1984 (the year when the first AIDS report occurred in New Zealand). The general trend is toward increasing numbers of people being notified with AIDS each quarter. This is depicted by the line showing a

moving average of the quarterly number of notifications received in the previous twelve months. However, the small number of notifications received per quarter means that the totals are subject to considerable fluctuation. The effect of this in the New Zealand situation is that it is hazardous to attempt to draw conclusions based on the data from a single quarter or even a single year. In countries with comparable AIDS notification rates but much larger populations (such as the United Kingdom) the quarterly fluctuations tend to be much smaller relative to underlying trends. Meaningful analysis of trends always involves observations over a considerable time period, which will be longer in countries with small populations and a relatively small number of people with AIDS.

Based on the observed number of people notified with AIDS so far in 1990 and comparison with previous years' quarterly totals, it is anticipated that a total of 78-91 notifications will be received for all of 1990.

Figure 1 - No. of AIDS notifications by quarter

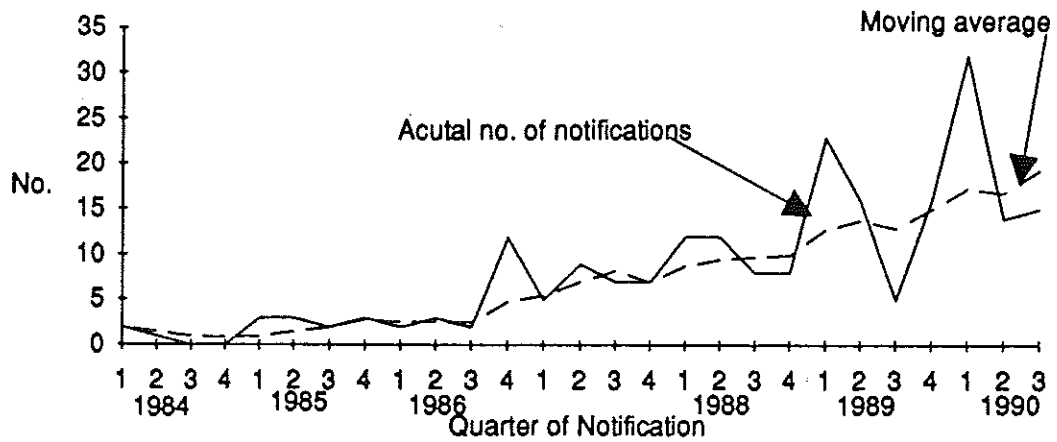
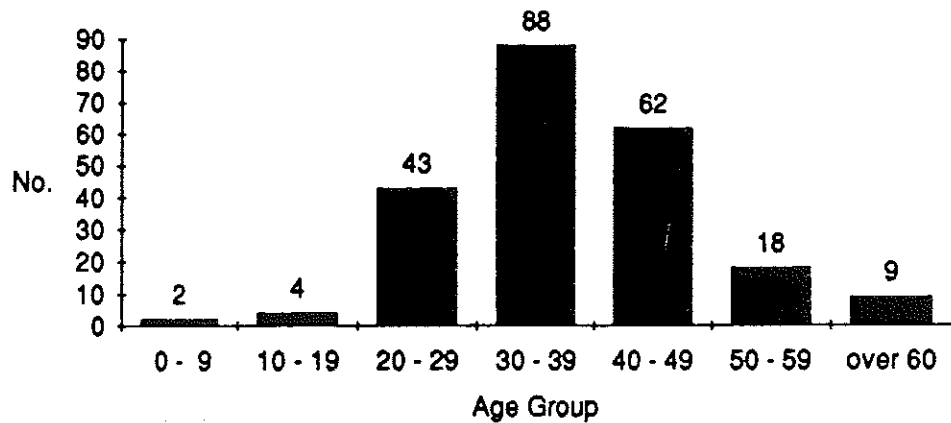


Table 1 - Most likely mode of HIV transmission: Among people with AIDS and among people with confirmed HIV-positive tests

Most likely mode of transmission:	People with AIDS:		HIV-Antibody Positive Tests	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Homo/bisexual	194	85.8	327	54.9
Homosexual & IVDU	3	1.3	8	1.3
Intravenous drug user	3	1.3	12	2.0
Heterosexual contact	9	4.0	12	2.0
Haemophilic	4	1.8	31	5.2
Transfusion-related	2	0.9	14	2.3
Perinatal	1	0.4	0	0.0
Unknown	10	4.4	192	32.2
TOTAL	226	100.0	596	100.0

Percentage columns may not sum to 100.0 because of rounding.

Figure 2 - People with AIDS in New Zealand: Age at time of notification



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 tests are also shown. Further information about HIV antibody tests is presented later in this report. The proportion of people with AIDS who are men with a history of sexual contact with men remains in the general range of 85-90%. The remaining 10-15% of people with AIDS are spread among the other modes of transmission of HIV. There are no new statistically significant trends regarding modes of transmission of HIV among people with AIDS. However, as mentioned above, regarding statistical interpretation of small numbers, such trends are likely to require long time periods to become apparent. Continued accurate monitoring of the occurrence of AIDS is also essential if any such trends are to be detected at the earliest possible stage.

SEX AND AGE DISTRIBUTION OF PEOPLE WITH AIDS

Of the 226 people with AIDS in New Zealand (as notified at 30 October 1990), seven are female and 219 are male. The age distribution of people with AIDS in New Zealand is shown in Figure 2 (on page 2).

OUTCOMES

As at 30 October, 1990 the number of known deaths among people with AIDS in New Zealand was 134. Table 2 shows the outcome according to year of notification.

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	6	31	3
1989	27	33	0
1990	44	20	1
TOTAL	79	134	13

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

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

Details regarding the Area Health Board regions from which notifications have arisen are shown in Table 3 on the next page.

INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

Table 4 (on page 4) shows an update of the most recently available AIDS notification data for New Zealand and

several other developed countries. For the reasons mentioned in issue 6, these should be considered a rough guideline only. In addition, there are slight differences between countries as to the date to which reporting is complete.

HIV ANTIBODY POSITIVE TEST RESULTS

As at 1 October 1990, there had been 596 confirmed positive HIV antibody test results recorded in New Zealand. In 536 (90%) the blood sample was from a male, in 29 instances (5%) from a female, and in 28 (5%) the gender of the person providing the blood sample was not reported on the test requisition. Because testing may be done under codes or pseudonyms some of these results will be duplicate positive tests for the same individual.

Table 3 - Regional Distribution

	No. of AIDS reports:	Cumul. rate per 100,000 pop.:
Northern North		
Island Prov.*	16	2.3
Auckland	131	14.4
Southern North		
Island Prov.+	14	2.8
Wellington	47	12.1
Canterbury	14	3.7
Other South		
Island	4	1.0
TOTAL	226	6.8

* Includes Northland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty and Tairāwhiti Area Health Board regions
 + Taranaki, Manawatu/Wanganui and Hawkes Bay Area Health Board regions

Table 4 - International Comparisons

Country:	Date of most recent report:	No. of AIDS cases reported:	Cumulative Rate per 100,000:
United States	31.08.90	144221	60.0
Canada	07.08.90	4425	17.2
Australia	10.08.90	1979	12.5
West Germany	31.08.90	5157	8.5
Belgium	30.06.90	725	7.4
New Zealand	30.10.90	226	6.8
United Kingdom	30.06.90	3437	6.1
Sweden	30.06.90	443	5.3
Ireland	30.06.90	152	4.2

As of 30 September 1990, 288,337 cases of AIDS had been reported to the World Health Organisation from 157 countries. This comprised 71,572 from Africa, 174,897 from the Americas, 805 from Asia, 38,883 from Europe and 2180 from Oceania.

For further information about the occurrence of AIDS in New Zealand, contact the HRC AIDS Epidemiology Group, Department of Preventive and Social Medicine, University of Otago Medical School, PO Box 913, Dunedin, New Zealand. Phone: (03) 479-7201, or fax: (03) 479-0529.