

.Calendar.

**XXXXI Meeting of the
Advisory Council on
AIDS (ACA)**
2:30pm 27 September 2002

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Advisory Council on AIDS 2002 to 2005

Dr Homer TSO (chairman)

Director of Health (vice-chairman)

Professor CN CHEN

Ms CHAN Yu

Rev CHU Yiu Ming

Dr Susan FAN

Ms Christine FANG

Professor Sara HO

Professor TH LAM

Professor YL LAU

Professor Peter LEE

Dr Patrick LI

Professor Diana MAK

Dr Richard TAN

Mrs Diana WONG

Mr Patrick WONG

Representative of the Chief
Executive of Hospital Authority

Representative of the Secretary for
Health, Welfare & Food

Representative of Director of
Education

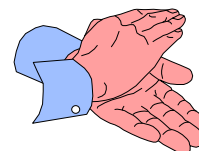
Representative of Director of Social
Welfare



Welcome to the New Council

IT was announced in the Government gazette on 23 August 2002 that the Dr Homer Tso and the Director of Health had been re-appointed chairman and vice-chairman respectively of the Advisory Council on AIDS, effective from 1 August 2002, for a period of three years. The appointment of eighteen members was also made at the same time (see list on the left).

The editor congratulates all members on their new appointment and look forward to working closely with all members to develop recommended policies on HIV/AIDS in Hong Kong. ⚡



VAO e-news

WHY not subscribe to the free e-news of the Virtual AIDS Office (VAO)?

VAO is the official website of Hong Kong Government's AIDS Programme, encompassing the four programme areas - clinical, HIV prevention and health promotion, surveillance, and policy. The Advisory Council on AIDS's website is affiliated with the VAO. Subscription to the e-news would ensure that you won't miss any new announcements, press releases, publications...delivered through the system. ⚡

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference of the Advisory Council (revised in 1996) are as follows:

To keep under review local and international trends and development relating to HIV infection and AIDS;

To advise Government on policy relating to the prevention, care and control of HIV infection and AIDS; and

To advise on the co-ordination of programmes on the prevention of HIV infection and the provision of services to people with HIV/AIDS in Hong Kong.

Reported HIV in Q2

ON 22 August, the Department of Health released the HIV situation of Hong Kong as derived from the voluntary reporting system that has been maintained by the Department since 1985.

It's noted that a total of 65 cases of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection were reported during the second quarter of 2002. It is the highest number reported in a quarter. Comprising 55 males and 10 females, 39 (60%) of these cases acquired the infection via heterosexual contacts and 12 (18.5%) via homosexual or bisexual contacts. Two cases involved injection drug use and the route of transmission of the remaining 12 cases were not known due to inadequate data.

This pattern of infection is similar to that of the past years: Sexual route of HIV transmission being the commonest route of HIV transmission, with more people contracting the virus via heterosexual than homosexual/bisexual contacts though the latter had remained significant in our locality.

The observation of a high number of reported HIV infections in this quarter is at least partly attributable to seasonal variation. The Department's spokesman remarked that often a lower number of reports were received in the first quarter because of the Chinese New Year while more cases were reported in the second quarter. Since a longer time period is necessary to monitoring the trend, the higher absolute number of HIV reported this quarter cannot yet be interpreted as an indication of rising HIV infection in Hong Kong.

Voluntary reporting forms one part of the HIV/AIDS surveillance system in Hong Kong. The other components are: seroprevalence monitoring, STI (sexually transmitted infection) surveillance and behavioural surveillance. ⌘

Situation Update

What does AIDS reporting tell ?

THE reporting pattern of AIDS in the last decade was analysed in an article published in the recent issue of the *Public Health and Epidemiology Bulletin*. Titled "The pattern of AIDS reporting and the implications on HIV surveillance", the authors concluded that....AIDS epidemiology can no longer be a reflection of HIV epidemiology, but a description of disease pattern and burden arising from the infection.

Interested members may download the bulletin from the Department of Health's webpage at <http://www.info.gov.hk/dh/publicat/index.htm>. ⌘

Reported HIV/AIDS Statistics (updated 30 June 2002)

		HIV		AIDS	
		total / Q2 2002		total / Q2 2002	
Gender	male	1524	55	510	11
	female	339	10	75	4
Ethnicity	Chinese	1298	50	459	13
	non-Chinese	565	15	126	2
Transmission	heterosexual	1067	39	388	12
	homosexual	351	11	101	3
	bisexual	88	1	29	0
	injecting drug use	48	2	9	0
	blood/bl products	68	0	19	0
	perinatal	14	0	6	0
	undetermined	227	12	33	0
TOTAL		1863	65	585	15

NOTE:

The "total" refers to the cumulative total number reported since 1984, under the voluntary HIV/AIDS Reporting System. "Q2" refers to the period March to June 2002. The "AIDS" number is a subset of the "HIV numbers" and the two should not be added.

SOURCE:

Special Preventive Programmes, Department of Health, Hong Kong SAR Government

Late diagnosis a concern

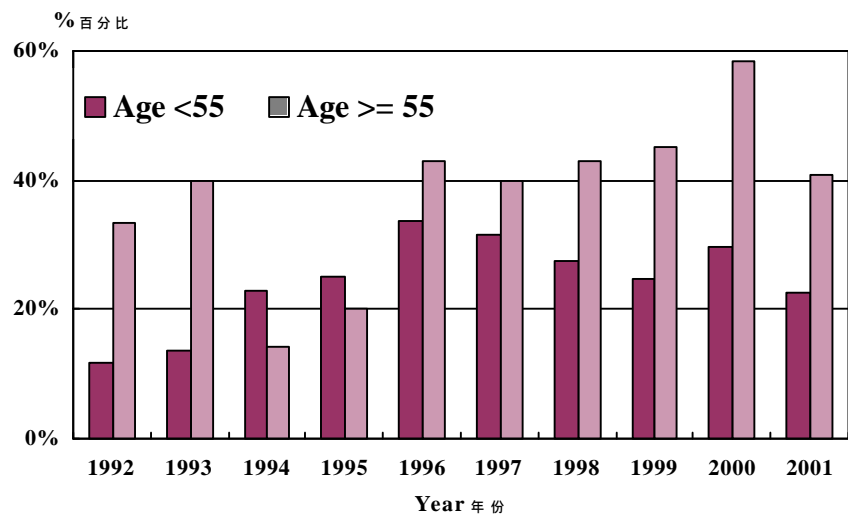
ONE major focus of the analysis given at the Department of Health's quarterly press meeting was the phenomenon of HIV infection in older people.

It was noted that whereas a majority of the reported infections were between the age of 26 and 45, the proportion of those above 55 had remained at about 10% in the last few years. Similar to the rest of the reported cases, sexual transmission was the single most important route of HIV spread.

Different from the younger patients, however, a significantly higher proportion of the above - 55 had presented late to the health care system. Very often, they developed clinical complications before an HIV test was sought. In the last years, about 15% of the reported AIDS were aged 55 or above.

It's speculated that older individuals might be less aware of their risk of contracting HIV through the practice of unprotected sex. ⚡

The following diagram illustrates the distribution of "late diagnosis" in reported HIV infections in Hong Kong. "Late diagnosis" is defined as the phenomenon of progression to AIDS within 3 months of HIV diagnosis. The solid bar represents the proportion of late diagnosis in those lower than the age of 55, while the hashed bar shows the same proportion but in reported cases at or above the age of 55.



Application Deadline

THE Council Secretariat received a letter from the Secretary of the Council for the AIDS Trust Fund about the extension of the deadline from 31 August to **30 September 2002** for the first round of application for funding under the new mechanism.

Applicants are advised by the AIDS Trust Fund to submit their proposals early so as to minimize the impacts of the change. ⚡

**Council
News**

Lions Red Ribbon Fellow

DR Yang Jun from Wuhan was in Hong Kong last month as one of the Lions Red Ribbon Fellow of the year. She gave a presentation to outline the 100% condom project organised in collaboration with partner agencies in Hubei province, through the support of the World Health organisation. The presentation was held at the Red Ribbon Centre and was participated by members of the Council and other AIDS workers in Hong Kong.

On 22 August, Dr Yang discussed with Dr Homer Tso, the Council chairman, about policy formulation and the model of the HIV programmes in Hong Kong. She also visited other AIDS services in Hong Kong during her stay here.

The Lions Red Ribbon Fellowship programme is a joint initiative between the Red Ribbon Centre (as an UNAIDS Collaborating Centre) and Lions Clubs International District 303 Hong Kong and Macau. In 2002, 6 fellows are sponsored to conduct tailored study visit in Hong Kong. ⚡

Council News

On the last day of August, members of the newly appointed Advisory Council on AIDS joined a gathering at the Red Ribbon Centre to exchange views on how to face up the new challenges of HIV/AIDS in Hong Kong.....

THE gathering began with a round of coffee. Dr Homer Tso, the chairman, then introduced members to the rationale behind the gathering and the normal time frames for preparing Council meetings. The dialogue began with discussions on the need, as in previous years, to set up committees to facilitate the processes of deliberation. It was agreed that there should be fora to network agencies, to develop technical guidance, and to examine specific issues on HIV prevention, care and control. New means of

communication and advocacy should be explored. Previous strategies might require modification in light of changes in societal conditions, needs of the community and international perspectives.

What then should be the key issues for the deliberation of the new term? There seems to be no lack of new challenges! To our members, the 11 targets proposed under the recommended strategies for 2002 to 2006 would remain the

most important yardstick to monitor Hong Kong's progress on HIV/AIDS. Members were pleased to note the increasing involvement of mainstream NGOs in AIDS work in the territory. New areas of research would be crucial: to provide the scientific foundation of new programmes, to map out risk and vulnerability patterns, and to understand the cost-effectiveness of selected activities which may in future become best practices even outside Hong Kong.

There would be problems, though. The dynamics of human mobility is a complex issue that demands a critical approach in correlating intervention with effectiveness. Defining sex education may prove to be more difficult than one could imagine. Interfacing the Mainland requires innovation and political sensitivity. Insurance and the involvement of the commercial sector has remained an untouched territory.....

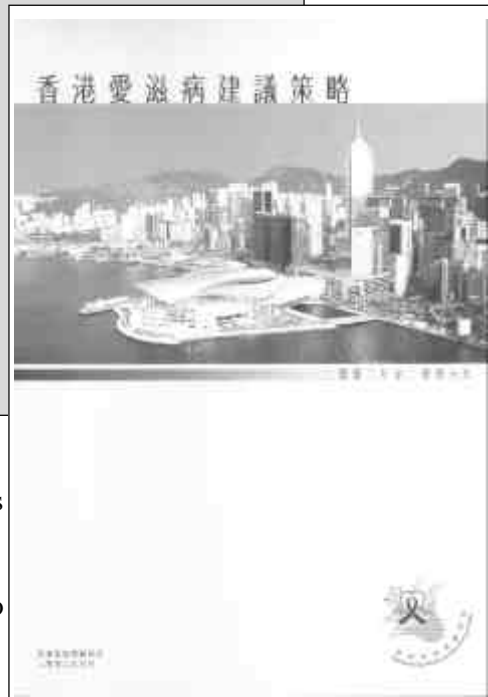
The four-plus hour meeting was a good starting point for preparing for the new term, the first meeting of which would be held on 27 September 2002. ♂

NEW RELEASE

THE recommended strategies of the Advisory Council on AIDS for 2002 to 2006 has been published.

Following months of discussions, reviews and debates, the new

publication has brought into focus the new directions recommended for Hong Kong's HIV/AIDS programmes for the coming five years. The Strategies is being distributed to members of the Council and people involved in the Hong Kong programmes. ♂



Hong Kong AIDS Strategies 2002-2006

