

⌘ Calendar ⌘

XLV Meeting of the Advisory Council on AIDS (ACA)

2:30 pm 9 January 2004

XXX Meeting of the Scientific Committee on AIDS (SCA)

2:30 pm 16 December 2003

XIV Meeting of the AIDS Prevention and Care Committee (APCC)

5:30 pm 3 December 2003

XII Meeting of the Committee on Promoting Acceptance of People Living with HIV/AIDS (CPA)

2:30 pm 27 November 2003

IN THIS ISSUE:

We have

Committee Meetings
on page 47

HIV/AIDS Update
on page 48

Photo
on page 49

World AIDS Campaign 2003

on pages 47 and 50

Committee Meetings

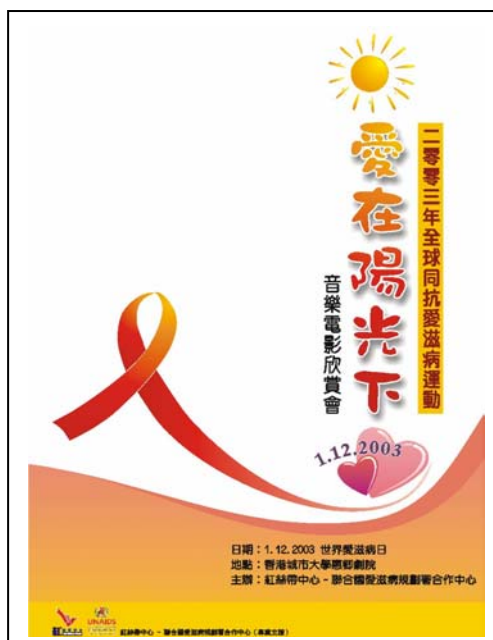
The Committee on Promoting Acceptance of People Living with HIV/AIDS (CPA) will meet again at its 12th meeting on 27 November 2003 at the Red Ribbon Center. There will be three main items on the agenda: (a) Ethical principles on partner counselling and referral services of HIV infection in Hong Kong; (b) Report on the progress of the AIDS Support and Services Working Group; and (c) A study on the needs assessment and social environment of people living with HIV/AIDS in Hong Kong.

Item (a) is a follow up to a previous discussion about patient confidentiality. A set of ethical principles about partner notification is proposed and is put under debate. While item (b) will focus on the report of the progress of the working group, it will also seek the meeting's endorsement to re-activate the haemophilia self-help group under community rehabilitation network. The last item, which is a summary of a study, aims to provide committee members with the results of a survey of 289 HIV infected persons attending the two public clinics in Hong Kong.

The AIDS Prevention and Care Committee (APCC) will also meet at its 14th meeting on 3 December 2003 at the Red Ribbon Centre. The meeting will focus its attention on the activities organized in support of the World AIDS Day 2003. There will be two main items on the agenda. The first one is "Review of World AIDS Campaign 2003 activities organized by NGOs in Hong Kong" and the last one is "Viewing of the educational film promoting the World AIDS Day 2003--'Love under the Sun' ". It provides an opportunity for members to identify best practices among the activities. ⌘ ⌘ ⌘

Love Under the Sun

The Red Ribbon Centre in collaboration with the Radio Television Hong Kong and the Chinese CDC has produced a music video with the title " Love under the Sun " to commemorate the World AIDS Campaign 2003. The music video will first be shown at Beijing on 27 November 2003 and at the Wei Hing Theatre of the City University of Hong Kong on 1 December 2003 to mark the World AIDS Day 2003. **Sammi Cheng** and **Andy Lau** will sing the theme song of the music video -- " Walk Together (同行)".



⌘ ⌘ ⌘ HIV/AIDS situation in the third quarter of 2003 in Hong Kong ⌘ ⌘ ⌘

Fifty-six people tested positive for the HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) antibody in the third quarter of 2003, bringing the cumulative total of reported HIV infections to 2,172, the Department of Health (DH) announced today (November 24).

Nine new AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) cases were reported in the same quarter. This brings to 650 the total number of confirmed AIDS cases reported since 1985.

The Senior Medical Officer (Special Preventive Programme) of DH, Dr Chan Kam-tim said, "HIV is spread through sexual contact (homosexual or heterosexual), needle-sharing among drug users and from infected mothers to their babies.

"Of the 56 new HIV cases reported, 24 acquired the infection via heterosexual contact, eight via homosexual or bisexual contact and six through intravenous drug use."

"The routes of transmission of the remaining 18 cases were undetermined due to inadequate data."

The 56 cases comprised 45 males and 11 females.

Dr Chan said, "Of the 2,172 cumulative total of HIV infections since 1984, around 80% have acquired the infection through sexual contact, of them 70% resulted from heterosexual transmission. Sixty-two infections occurred among intravenous drug users.

"The newly diagnosed cases for this quarter were reported by four major sources: public hospitals and clinics (24), private hospitals and clinics (12), Social Hygiene Clinics (5) and the Department of Health AIDS Counselling Service (6). The four sources have accounted for 43.2%, 22.9%, 15.5% and 13.5%, respectively, of all reported infections.

"Of the newly reported cases in this quarter, 32 (57.1%) have received care from the HIV specialist services of the Department of Health or the Hospital Authority; 69% of the reported cases in the first three quarters of 2003 have received these services where effective antiretroviral treatment is offered according to clinical indication.

"In this quarter, the most commonly presenting AIDS defining illness was *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia, closely followed by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* infection," Dr Chan said.

This quarter's figures have revealed the following highlights: (i) the number of reported cases of HIV infection in injecting drug use in Q3 2003 was increased. The reason for the increase is that more samples were tested in the Injecting drug use population as a result of the 「Universal HIV Antibody (Urine) Testing Programme」 piloted in the Methadone Clinics; and (ii) HIV infected persons with age greater than 55 were commonly presented with late diagnosis. The reason may be due to depressed immune status as a result of increasing age, neglect of HIV symptoms and low perceived HIV risk.

Reported HIV/AIDS Statistics (updated 30 September 2003)

		HIV		AIDS	
		total / Q3 2003		total / Q2 2003	
Gender	male	1760	45	561	7
	female	412	11	89	2
Ethnicity	Chinese	1511	42	508	7
	non-Chinese	661	14	142	2
Transmission	heterosexual	1226	24	434	8
	homosexual	414	8	112	1
	bisexual	97	0	30	0
	injecting drug use	62	6	10	0
	blood/bl products	68	0	20	0
	perinatal	15	0	6	0
	undertermined	290	18	38	0
TOTAL		2172	56	650	9

NOTE: The "total" refers to the cumulative total number reported since 1984, under the voluntary HIV/AIDS Reporting System. Q3 refers to the period from July to September 2003. The "AIDS" number is a subset of the "HIV numbers" and the two should not be added.

SOURCE : Special Preventive Programme, Department of Health, Hong Kong SAR Government

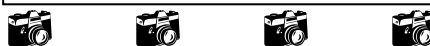
Community Participation



The Council Chairman officiating at the Inauguration Ceremony of the " Training Working on Methadone Treatment for HIV Prevention" on 22 October 2003.



The Editorial Board would like to wish you a *Merry Christmas* and a *Happy New Year!!!*



The Council Chairman was delivering a speech at the closing ceremony of the " Children Can Help " Project organized by the Hong kong Committee on Children's Rights on 22 November 2003 at the Kwai Fong Metroplaza. The theme of the speech is the prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV in Hong kong.



The Hong Kong International Conference on Infectious Diseases (HKICID-2004)

Welcome Message from the Organizer

On behalf of the Department of Health of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, it is my pleasure to invite you to the Hong Kong International Conference on Infectious Diseases (HKICID-2004). The two-day conference will be held from 31 January to 1 February 2004.

Being the health adviser to the Government, the Department places significant emphasis on the prevention and control of infectious diseases. Recognizing that infectious diseases do not respect national borders, international collaboration and coordination are vital. The aim of this Conference is to provide a forum to identify and evaluate effective public health practices on the prevention and control of infectious diseases. Great emphasis will be put on emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases. In this respect, we are most fortunate to have a distinguished faculty of speakers, many of whom are renowned experts in their chosen field. Through this unique opportunity, researchers and policy makers alike can establish unparalleled networking and collaboration.

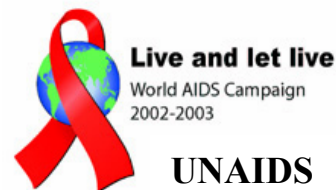
Hong Kong is a truly international city of Asia fusing with Chinese tradition and Western customs to create a unique personality at its own. Hong Kong is uniquely placed to host this international conference not just because of its varied cuisine, diverse shopping and spectacular sights, but also because of our commitment in strengthening our capacity to combat infectious diseases. For those coming from overseas, I trust you will experience the fun, the excitement and the energy of Hong Kong and enjoy the city as much as the Conference.

I look forward to welcoming you to the HKICID-2004.

Dr P Y Lam
Director of Health

Dr Lam is the Vice-chairman of the Hong Kong Advisory Council on AIDS. For more information about the conference, please visit the web site:

www.hkicid2004.org



The World AIDS Campaign 2003 continues to focus on stigma and discrimination under the slogan Live and let live....

HIV and AIDS can touch raw nerves in all our communities. The stigma of HIV and AIDS relates to deep taboos within society. For many the disease has a strong association with prolonged illness, death, sex and drug use -- issues that many of us find difficult to talk about openly. Along with general discomfort about discussing these 'taboo' issues, many communities are also dealing with high levels of ignorance, denial, fear and intolerance about the disease itself. This potent combination can lead to rejection and even aggression against people living with HIV. As a result, people with HIV have been disowned by their families, fired from their jobs, asked to leave their homes. They can face discrimination in receiving medical care. In extreme cases they have even been physically attacked.

Stigma and discrimination can lead to depression, lack of self-worth and despair for people living with HIV. But people living with the disease are not the only ones endangered by this fear and prejudice.

Negative attitudes about HIV can create a climate in which people become more afraid of the stigma and discrimination associated with the disease than of the disease itself. When fear and discrimination prevail, people may choose to ignore the possibility that they may be HIV-positive - even if they know they have taken risks. And people may decide not to take measures to protect themselves in fear that in doing so they could be associating themselves with HIV. All of this helps to create an environment in which the disease can more easily spread.

This year's World AIDS Campaign encourages both individuals and institutions to reflect on how they respond to those living with HIV and AIDS. With challenging posters and television images the campaign clearly shows how the most painful symptoms of HIV and AIDS are often the reactions of others. When someone feels safe within their own community, they are more likely to take responsibility for their HIV status. This is why it is so important for all of us to examine our own attitudes. We need to ask ourselves: are we helping to create an environment where people can take responsibility for themselves and others? Or do our attitudes contribute to an environment of shame, fear and denial that prevents people from taking action? Only by confronting stigma and discrimination across the world will the fight against HIV/AIDS be won.

Live and let live. Help us fight fear, shame, ignorance and injustice worldwide.