

Calendar

L Meeting of the Advisory Council on AIDS (ACA)

2:30 pm 8 April 2005

XXXV Meeting of the Scientific Committee on AIDS (SCA)

2:30 pm 15 March 2005

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

6:30 pm 18 March 2005

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

2:30 pm 8 June 2005

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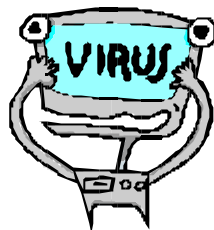
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Web site: <http://www.aca-hk.com>



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Superstrain

It has been reported that a previously unknown superstrain of the virus that causes AIDS has been diagnosed in New York, a New York man in his 40s who had had unprotected sex with many men just before the diagnosis. So far only one case has been found. In this case, the mutated virus was drug-resistant and it took just two months to progress from HIV infection to full blown AIDS, a process normally takes 7 to 10 years.

Technically the virus is known as a strain of three-class antiretroviral-resistant HIV, or 3-DCR HIV. It means the virus is resistant to three of the four classes of drugs used to treat HIV.

Dr LEE Shui-shan of the Special Preventive Programme at the Centre for Health Protection said it was too early to say whether the New York case represented the evolution of a superbug. He pointed out that two things had happened. First, someone had contracted the virus and progressed very rapidly to AIDS. Secondly, the virus was resistant to the three classes of antiretroviral drugs.

It is believed that the “early” release of the New York story is to raise awareness of the dangers of unprotected sex among those already exposed to HIV. It has been known for years that if someone with HIV infection continues to have unsafe sex they risk being exposed to other forms of the virus. More than one form can survive at the same time. If an infection imposes on another infection, the more virulent strain takes over and becomes super-infection. Someone living with the virus and showing no symptoms may develop many clinical problems suddenly.



HIV/AIDS Situation in 2004

A total of 268 HIV cases were reported to the Department of Health last year, the highest annual number ever recorded. The figure showed a 17% increase compared with 229 in the preceding year.

Sexual transmission continued to be the major mode of HIV spread in Hong Kong, accounting for 172 cases of the newly reported HIV cases, about 64%. Of these cases, 107 involved heterosexual transmission and 65 occurred between men having sex with men.

Under the voluntary reporting system, some 28% of the reports were incomplete, making the determination of the route of infection impossible.

※ *Methadone clinic tests uncover more cases*

HIV infection cases contracted through injection drug use had increased to 21 (7.8% of newly reported cases) in 2004, from 10 (3.8%) in 2002 and 11 (4.8%) in 2003.

The increase in the past two years was in line with the increase in the number of HIV tests performed in methadone clinics. In January 2004, a universal HIV testing programme was rolled out to all methadone clinics after a pilot the previous year.

In the first year of the programme, 8,905 methadone attendees were tested for HIV, covering 90% of the total attendees.

Eighteen (0.2%) tested positive. This was in contrast to the years prior to the programme, when only 318 and 148 HIV tests were

performed in methadone clinics in 2002 and 2003 and none were found to be positive.



※ *Pregnancy tests cut mother-to-newborn transmission*

Referring to mother-to-child HIV transmission, transmission of this kind has become a rarity since the implementation of the Universal Antenatal HIV Testing Programme in September 2001.

Six HIV-positive pregnant women were diagnosed under this programme in 2004. No new perinatal infections have been diagnosed since the introduction of the programme.

In 2004, the number of AIDS reports dropped from 56 in 2003 to 49, the lowest recorded since 1996 (70 cases) when the use of effective treatment HAART (highly active antiretroviral treatment) started later that year.

※ *3,000 HIV/AIDS sufferers in Hong Kong*

It is estimated that more than 3,000 people are living with HIV/AIDS in Hong Kong. The high HIV rates in neighbouring cities, extensive human mobility across borders and the practice of risk behaviour are some of the factors that may predispose Hong Kong to an upsurge of the epidemic.

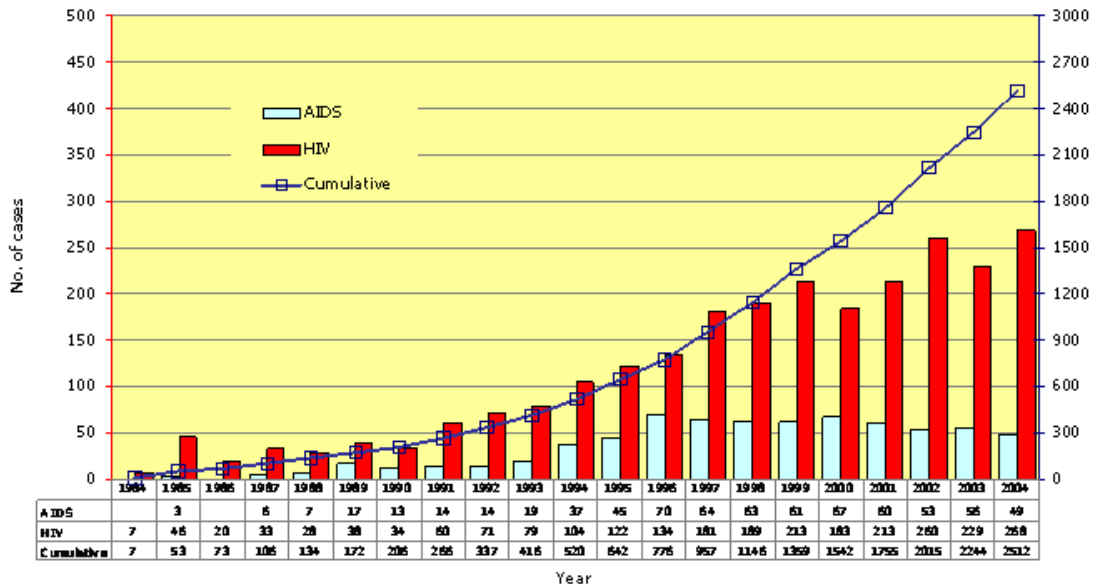
The public should take precautions by practising safe sex and avoid injecting drugs. Regular use of methadone is an effective means of harm reduction in drug users.

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Annual HIV/AIDS Statistics

香港每年愛滋病病毒感染及愛滋病統計

1984 – December 2004, Hong Kong (n=2512/718)



HIV/AIDS STATISTICS IN HONG KONG updated 31 December 2004

		This Quarter		2004		Cumulative	
		HIV	AIDS	HIV	AIDS	HIV	AIDS
Sex	Male	46	13	205	44	2017	620
	Female	9	2	63	5	495	98
Ethnicity	Chinese	37	9	185	37	1742	560
	Non-Chinese	18	6	83	12	770	158
Route of Transmission	Sexual Contacts	27	12	172	43	1965	637
	Heterosexual	16	11	107	35	1373	487
	Homosexual	9	1	59	8	487	120
	Bisexual	2	0	6	0	105	30
	Injecting drug use	5	2	21	3	86	13
	Blood/blood products recipients	0	0	0	0	68	20
	Perinatal	0	0	0	0	15	6
Undetermined	23	1	75	3	378	42	
Total		55	15	268	49	2512	718



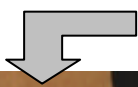
7th ICAAP

The 7th International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific will be held from 1 to 5 July 2005 in Kobe, Japan. The main theme of this Congress is “Bridging Science and Community”. Even though science has made great strides in virological and pathophysiological understanding of HIV infection and ARV development, it is essential that a bridge is built to all affected communities so that they have access to and can participate in the development of prevention, treatment and care strategies. Without the active ownership of communities at a local level, an effective and decentralized response to HIV/AIDS will not be possible.

ACA members who are interested in attending the Congress can approach the secretariat for further details. The website for the 7th ICAAP is: www.icaap7.jp

Cancellation of 16th CPA Meeting

The 16th meeting of the Committee on Promoting Acceptance of People Living with HIV/AIDS originally scheduled for 2 March 2005 (Wednesday) has been cancelled. The CPA is contemplating launching a new Announcement of Public Interest (API) featuring Yao Ming and Magic Johnson to promote the acceptance of people living with HIV/AIDS. The new API is expected to be on screen in April/May this year.



SPP's Annual Dinner



The Special Preventive Programme's Annual Dinner was held on 16 February 2005 to celebrate the Year of the Rooster. All staff of SPP together with the guests of honours including Dr Homer Tso, Dr Patrick LI and other ex-colleagues of SPP spent an enjoyable and memorable evening. Fortune smiled on Ms San Wong, NO, who won the grand prize of the lucky draw.



Lucky Lady

