

AIDS - New Zealand

With this issue the format of AIDS New Zealand has been changed. The numbers of people notified with AIDS or found to be infected with HIV, in the previous quarter and in total, are now presented at the front. The review of an aspect of the HIV/AIDS epidemic has also been moved to the first page. It is hoped that this will broaden the interest in AIDS New Zealand. Comments are welcome.

ESTIMATE OF THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE CURRENTLY LIVING WITH DIAGNOSED HIV INFECTION IN NEW ZEALAND

The number of people living with diagnosed HIV infection gives an indication of the amount of health and support services needed in this field. Using data on the annual number of people diagnosed with HIV and deaths from AIDS, it has been found that there has been a steady increase in the number of people living with diagnosed HIV infection in New Zealand since 1985. This is due to a drop in the annual number of people dying from AIDS, which is lower than the number being diagnosed with HIV infection.

In New Zealand these numbers can be estimated by subtracting from the number of people found to be infected with HIV, the number known to have died or gone overseas. The latter information is available only for people notified with AIDS. In this way it is estimated that at the end of 1997 there were approximately 700 people (600 males and 100 females) living with diagnosed HIV infection in New Zealand, including those with AIDS (Table 1). The figures are only estimates as some known HIV-infected people (who have not developed AIDS) may have gone overseas, others may have entered New Zealand and not been tested here, and others may have died without developing AIDS.

These estimates are of those diagnosed with HIV. The actual number infected will be higher as some infected people will not have been tested.

AIDS AND HIV INFECTION IN NEW ZEALAND TO END DECEMBER 1997

In the final quarter of 1997, there were 7 notifications of AIDS (all male), while 17 people (13 male and 4 female) were found to be infected with HIV.

To the end of 1997, in total 641 people (612 male and 29 female) have been notified with AIDS, and 1231 (1089 male, 123 female and 19 sex not stated) have been found to be infected with HIV.

The cumulative incidence rate of AIDS notifications to the end 1997 was 18.7 per 100,000 total population.

Table 1 Estimated number of people living with diagnosed HIV in New Zealand (includes people with AIDS)

Year	Male	Female	Total
1985	57	0	57
1986	160	4	164
1987	246	7	253
1988	316	8	324
1989	364	13	377
1990	399	18	417
1991	442	30	472
1992	471	35	506
1993	492	45	537
1994	517	59	576
1995	533	72	605
1996	574	88	662
1997	598	100	698

Estimation of the number of people currently living with diagnosed HIV infection by health region

Using information on where people were tested for HIV, and on where AIDS notifications have been made, the number and prevalence rate of people living with diagnosed HIV infection in various parts of the country has been estimated (Table 2). An additional source of uncertainty is that people may have sought HIV testing outside their area of residence, or moved following the diagnosis of HIV infection or AIDS.

Table 2 Estimated number of people known to be living with diagnosed HIV infection by health region

Health region	Number	Estimated prevalence rate
Northern & Midland*	432	22.4/100,000
Central	160	17.9/100,000
Southern	88	11.2/100,000
Unknown	18	
New Zealand	698	18.5/100,000†

* The Northern and Midland health regions have been combined in view of the relative proximity of the main centres in these regions, and the past configuration of sub-specialty services.

† Includes people for whom no place of testing was known.

Overall approximately 1 in 5400 New Zealanders are living with diagnosed infection. The rate is higher in the northern part of the country.

NOTIFICATIONS OF AIDS IN NEW ZEALAND IN THE LAST QUARTER OF 1997

Seven people, all males, were notified as having AIDS in the final quarter of 1997. Of these, 6 were men reported to have had sex with men, and the remaining man suffered from haemophilia and was infected by a contaminated

blood product. The notification of one person reported in September 1997 has been withdrawn, as he did not meet criteria for AIDS.

Thus there had been 641 people notified with AIDS in New Zealand by 31 December 1997. Of these, 612 were male and 29 female.

The number of known deaths among people notified is 501. Table 4 (page 4) shows the likely exposure categories of the people notified with AIDS (and those diagnosed as being infected with HIV) for the twelve months to the end of 1997, and in total to that date.

PEOPLE FOUND TO BE INFECTED WITH HIV IN NEW ZEALAND IN THE LAST QUARTER OF 1997

The AIDS Epidemiology Group has been informed of 17 people (13 male and 4 female) found to be infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) in the final quarter of 1997. This brings the total of people found to be infected in New Zealand to 1231 (1089 male, 123 female, 19 sex not stated).

Of the 13 males found to be infected in the final quarter of 1997, it was reported that 7 had had sex with men (one of whom had also injected drugs), while 4 had been heterosexually infected. Information is awaited on the remaining 2 men. All the men reported to have been heterosexually infected were believed to have been infected in high prevalence areas overseas.

Of the 4 females found to be infected in the final quarter of 1997, 3 were reported to have been heterosexually infected, while the means of infection was not known for the remaining women. All 4 women were from parts of the world where heterosexual transmission is common.

INFORMATION ON THE EPIDEMIC OF AIDS AND
HIV INFECTION IN NEW ZEALAND TO THE END
OF DECEMBER 1997

The annual numbers of people notified and of those diagnosed, as having AIDS in New Zealand are shown in Table 3. The numbers are different as some notifications occur a considerable time after diagnosis.

It is likely that the numbers of people diagnosed in 1997 and possibly earlier will increase due to delayed notifications. The largest annual number of people diagnosed with AIDS in New Zealand was in 1989. Since that time the annual number of diagnoses has declined. In spite of delayed notifications it is probable that the drop in diagnoses in 1997 compared to preceding years

will be confirmed. This fall is likely to be partly due to the recent introduction of new treatments that delay the progression of HIV infection.

Also shown in Table 3 are the annual numbers of people found to be infected with HIV. HIV antibody tests were first available here in 1985. It is important to appreciate that infection could have occurred many years before it was diagnosed, and therefore that these figures do not represent the number of new infections occurring each year.

The likely means of infection and ethnicity of people notified with AIDS and found to be infected with HIV are shown in Tables 4 and 5 (overleaf).

Table 3 Number of people notified and diagnosed with AIDS, and found to be infected with HIV, in each year

Year	AIDS				HIV Infection (includes AIDS)			
	Notified	Diagnosed			Male	Female	NS	Total
		Male	Female	Total				
1983	0	5	0	5				
1984	3	4	0	4				
1985	11	12	0	12	62	0	1	63
1986	19	15	1	16	116	5	4	125
1987	28	30	0	30	97	3	5	105
1988	38	44	0	44	95	1	0	96
1989	59	67	5	72	99	6	3	108
1990	73	70	1	71	98	6	0	104
1991	78	66	3	69	98	13	0	111
1992	50	56	6	62	96	9	1	106
1993	70	50	3	53	69	17	2	88
1994	44	45	2	47	72	15	1	88
1995	49	57	2	59	66	14	2	82
1996	76	54	5	59	74	18	0	92
1997	43	25	1	26†	47	16	0	63
Unknown	0	12	0	12				
Total	641	612	29	641	1089	123	19	1231

† The numbers of people known to have been diagnosed in 1997, and possibly in earlier years, will increase due to delayed notification. NS = not stated

Table 4 Exposure category by time of notification of people with AIDS, and by time of diagnosis for those found to be infected with HIV

Exposure category	Sex	AIDS				HIV Infection *			
		12 months to 31.12.97		Total to 31.12.97		12 months to 31.12.97		Total to 31.12.97	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Homosexual contact	Male	32	74.4	521	81.3	23	36.5	685	55.6
Homosexual contact & IDU	Male	0	0	10	1.6	1	1.6	13	1.1
Heterosexual contact	Male	5	11.6	28	4.4	9	14.3	54	4.4
	Female	1	2.3	21	3.3	14	22.2	85	6.9
Injecting drug use (IDU)	Male	1	2.3	10	1.6	3	4.8	31	2.5
	Female	0	0	5	0.8	0	0	8	0.6
Blood product recipient	Male	2	4.7	15	2.3	1	1.6	29	2.4
Transfusion recipient	Male	0	0	1	0.2	1†	1.6	3	0.2
	Female	0	0	1	0.2	0	0	5	0.4
	NS	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0.4
Perinatal	Male	1	2.3	1	0.2	1	1.6	5	0.4
	Female	0	0	1	0.2	0	0	2	0.2
Awaiting information/undetermined	Male	1	2.3	26	4.1	8	12.7	268	21.8
	Female	0	0	1	0.2	2	3.2	19	1.5
	NS	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	1.1
Other	Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.1
	Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0.3
TOTAL		43	100.0	641	100.0	63	100.0	1231	100.0

NS = Not stated

*Includes people who have developed AIDS

†Occurred overseas

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Table 5 Ethnicity by time of notification of people with AIDS, and by time of diagnosis for those found to be infected with HIV. Information on ethnicity of people found to be infected with HIV only available since 1996

Ethnicity	Sex	AIDS				HIV Infection *			
		12 months to 31.12.97		Total to 31.12.97		12 months to 31.12.97		1.1.96 to 31.12.97	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
European/pakeha	Male	32	74.4	502	78.3	31	49.2	71	45.8
	Female	0	0	21	3.3	3	4.8	9	5.8
Maori†	Male	5	11.6	68	10.6	5	7.9	12	7.7
	Female	0	0	1	0.2	1	1.6	2	1.3
Pacific Island	Male	1	2.3	13	2.0	0	0	2	1.3
	Female	0	0	3	0.5	3	4.8	3	1.9
Other	Male	4	9.3	22	3.4	6	9.5	20	12.9
	Female	1	2.3	4	0.6	8	12.7	18	11.6
Awaiting information/undetermined	Male	0	0	7	1.1	5	7.9	17	11.0
	Female	0	0	0	0	1	1.6	1	0.6
TOTAL		43	100.0	641	100.0	63	100.0	155	100.0

*Includes people who have developed AIDS

†Includes people who belong to Maori and another ethnic group

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