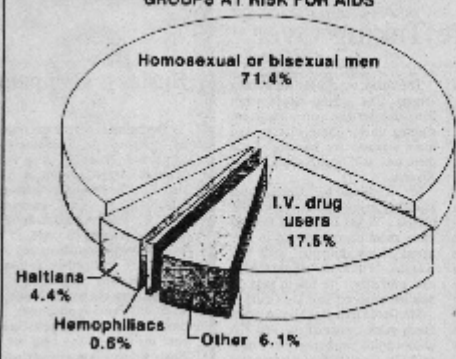


A.I.D.. Review

By: Shari Ann Richerson

GROUPS AT RISK FOR AIDS



Although AIDS still most often strikes homosexual or bisexual men, the disease is rapidly spreading to other segments of our population. Within the next several years, the AIDS risk probably will not be limited to a minority segment but may include all of us. Note: Haitians are included here because not long ago they made up a significant segment of people particularly "at risk" to acquire the disease. In more recent months, incidence of AIDS among Haitians has dwindled in comparison to that in other segments of the population.

The incurable, fatal epidemic known as AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome), is found to be caused by a unique strain of the virus known as HTLV V-III (Human T-Cell Lymphotropic Virus Type III), certain types of leukemia are caused by this type of viral family. AIDS was once known as GRID (Gay Related Immune Deficiency), and was known mainly among the gay population.

Although it is a gay-related disease there has not been one case of AIDS reported among lesbians, even though anyone can get it.

The reason is so strong among gay people seems to point to the kind of lifestyle they have, and a change in this could mean life or death.

AIDS is defined as the person must be under 60 years of age, and

must have no other reason to be immune suppressed.

It is known to strike young, otherwise healthy individuals, and has been found in nonhomosexual men, women, children, and Haitian entrants in the United States.

30 states, and 40 foreign countries have reported AIDS, and it has been recognized as an epidemic since 1981. There are between one and five, and sometimes even more cases reported per day. There have been one to two thousand cases reported thus far. Although none have been reported in Grant County, a cluster is believed to be in Marion at the Veterans Administration.

There have been over 16,000 Americans who are known to have acquired AIDS, and out of these there have been 204 cases in children. Half of these people have died.

Even though a cure, Ribovirin has been tested, it has not been approved. Even if this is found to be a cure, there would still be no cases because it is found to develop very gradually over a period of time and may take up to three years to be discovered. Other drug being tested include Interferon, Tazidiskin, Cyclophosphamide, and many more.

There is no known vaccine to prevent the disease either.

One big question is "should students with AIDS be allowed in school?" Araya Beebe comments that it should be with a doctor's permission and OK'd by the school board. I would hate to see a student denied education because of prejudice if it was medically O.K. for them to attend.

The type of contact that occurs between persons at school should not result in the transmission of AIDS.

A major cause of death for those who have AIDS is Pneumocystis

Carinii Pneumonia which is caused by a germ like parasite known as Pneumocystis.

AIDS is rarely found in saliva. Out of 71 homosexuals tested only once was it found in saliva. It has also been found that the use of a condom can prevent AIDS.

There is hardly any evidence that AIDS is able to be obtained by casual contact. It is found to be transmitted from blood and semen. It may also be carried in nose, urine, stool and breast milk.

Even though AIDS can be obtained through blood transfusions, there is now a test known as an Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay (ELISA) that screens people who donate blood. Although there is a test, even if you test positive, this test does not diagnose. You are allowed in some cases to donate your own blood for certain operations.

Other known ways of obtaining AIDS is through drugs. If you share needles or syringes with a carrier, you are at a much greater risk.

AIDS virus is fragile

Outside the body, the AIDS virus is fragile, succumbing to equipment and chemicals there found in most American homes. Clothes and dish-washing equipment can be effective. So can a variety of common chemicals.

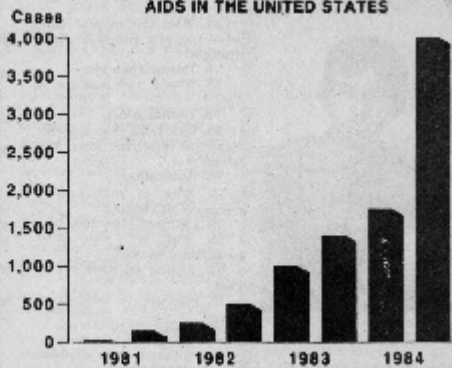
Here are some specific ways the virus can be eliminated:

■ Dish and clothes-washing — Exposure to temperatures of 133 degrees Fahrenheit (56 degrees Celsius) for 10 minutes.

■ Chemicals — Exposure to disinfectant solutions such as hydrogen peroxide, rubbing alcohol, Lysol and household bleach.

■ Hand-washing — Use of commercially available germicide skin cleansers (such as Ibatine or Hibiclens) can kill the AIDS virus. These cleansers are available at pharmacies and in many supermarkets.

AIDS IN THE UNITED STATES



Since its discovery in 1981, AIDS has spread rapidly and alarmingly in our country. Each year, AIDS has almost doubled in incidence. Although complete statistics for 1985 are not yet available, AIDS patients now total approximately 16,000. Half of these people already have died.

The health care cost for each victim is between \$9,000 and \$10,000 billion dollars. The total bill from 1981-85 will exceed three billion dollars in the United States only.

The highest cities and states in the United States are New York City, New York; Los Angeles and San Francisco, California; Miami, Florida; Newark, New Jersey, and Texas.

The week of January 12 was AIDS Awareness Week. The AIDS task force that was in charge of this consists of social helpers, homosexuals, hospitals, and other community helpers. There is nothing being done around here, but there is in Ft. Wayne and Indianapolis.

There are two toll-free AIDS Hotlines in the United States. One is from the U.S. Public Health Service and the number is 1-800-342-AIDS. The other is the National Gay Taskforce, and it is

urides line at 1-800-221-7044.

Other numbers to call are 635-0832 and 633-8406 in Indianapolis. Also Lillian Krider, an infection control nurse at Parkview Hospital

AIDS and body fluids

The AIDS virus is carried in body fluids. Although only blood and semen are definitely known to transmit the virus, other fluids may carry it, including saliva, tears, urine, stool and breast milk.

In Ft. Wayne at 219-484-6636, extension 2353.

For additional information, you can call Brown Boyer, an infection control nurse at Marion General Hospital at 662-1441.