

CHP reviews local HIV/AIDS situation in first quarter of 2023

A total of 96 cases of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection were reported to the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) in the first quarter of 2023, taking the cumulative total of HIV infections reported locally to 11 737 since 1984.

Of the 96 additional cases involving 87 males and nine females, 58 (60.4 per cent) acquired the infection via homosexual or bisexual contact, 19 (19.8 per cent) via heterosexual contact, two (2.1 per cent) via injecting drug use, and one (1 per cent) via blood or blood product transfusion outside Hong Kong. The routes of transmission of the remaining 16 cases have yet to be determined due to incomplete information.

The new cases were mainly reported by three sources: public hospitals, clinics and laboratories (49 cases); private hospitals, clinics and laboratories (14 cases), and the AIDS Unit under the DH (12 cases). Also, 72 newly reported HIV-infected people (75 per cent) have already received HIV specialist services at the DH or the Hospital Authority.

Regarding cases of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), 35 new cases were reported in this quarter, of which 19 cases (54.3 per cent) were attributed to homosexual or bisexual contact, 15 cases (42.9 per cent) were related to heterosexual contact, and one case (2.9 per cent) was associated with injected drug use. In this quarter, the most common AIDS-defining illness remains as Pneumocystis pneumonia. Since 1985, a cumulative total of 2 417 confirmed AIDS cases has been reported in Hong Kong.

Reviewing the latest HIV/AIDS situation in Hong Kong, a spokesman for the CHP said, "Sexual transmission remained the major mode of HIV transmission. Members of the public should use condoms consistently and properly to reduce the risk of acquiring HIV. HIV is the cause of AIDS. Early HIV treatment with antiretroviral drugs effectively prevents progression to AIDS and other complications. Lifelong antiretroviral treatment is indicated for all people with HIV, and the treatment remarkably improves their health and survival. Moreover, infected people who achieve sustained viral suppression to an undetectable level with treatment will not transmit the virus through sex, i.e. Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U).

"Members of the public with a history of unsafe sex should take an HIV antibody test early. Key populations with a higher risk of infection should undergo regular HIV screening, while people who had sex but do not belong to these key populations should consider getting tested at least once. They can visit the AIDS Hotline website or call AIDS Hotline (2780 2211) for a free, anonymous and confidential HIV antibody test. HIV-positive people should seek specialist care and HIV treatment as soon as possible."

The public may visit the following pages for more information on HIV/AIDS: the Virtual AIDS Office (www.aids.gov.hk), the Red Ribbon Centre (www.rrc.gov.hk), the AIDS Hotline website (www.27802211.com) and the Gay Men HIV Information website (www.21171069.gov.hk).