

CHP reviews local HIV/AIDS situation in first quarter 2024

A total of 105 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 2024, taking the cumulative total of HIV infections reported locally to 12 143 since 1984.

Of the 105 additional cases involving 83 males and 22 females, 61 (58.1 per cent) acquired the infection via homosexual or bisexual contact, 24 (22.9 per cent) via heterosexual contact. The routes of transmission of the remaining 20 cases have yet to be determined due to incomplete information.

The new cases were mainly reported by three sources: public hospitals, clinics and laboratories (51 cases); AIDS service organisations (18 cases); the AIDS Unit under the DH (13 cases), and the Social Hygiene Clinics under the DH (13 cases). Also, 79 of the 105 newly reported cases have already received HIV specialist services at the DH or the Hospital Authority.

Regarding cases of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), 24 new cases were reported in this quarter, of which 11 cases (45.8 per cent) were attributed to homosexual or bisexual contact, and 11 cases (45.8 per cent) were related to heterosexual contact. The route of transmission of the remaining two cases has yet to be determined due to incomplete information. In this quarter, the most common AIDS-defining illness remained to be *Pneumocystis pneumonia*. Since 1985, a cumulative total of 2 507 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 possibility of 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. Members of the public can reserve a free, anonymous and confidential HIV antibody test via the DH's HIV Testing Service website (www.hivtest.gov.hk) or AIDS Hotline (2780 2211). They can also order HIV self-test kits (oral fluid-based and blood-based (fingerprick) testing kits) on the HIV Testing Service

website, and collect the self-test kits at various pick-up locations in Hong Kong. People with HIV should seek specialist care and HIV treatment as soon as possible," said the spokesman.

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 HIV Testing Service website (www.hivtest.gov.hk) and the Gay Men HIV Information website (www.21171069.gov.hk).