

CHP reviews local HIV/AIDS situation in first quarter of 2021

A total of 101 additional 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 2021, taking the cumulative total of HIV infections reported locally to 10 886 since 1984.

Reviewing the latest HIV/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) situation in Hong Kong, a spokesman for the DH today (May 25) said, "Sexual transmission remained the major mode of HIV transmission. Members of the public should use condoms consistently and properly so as to reduce the risk of acquiring HIV."

Of the 101 HIV cases, involving 87 males and 14 females, reported in the quarter, 50 acquired the infection via homosexual or bisexual contact and 22 via heterosexual contact. The routes of transmission of the remaining 29 cases have yet to be determined due to incomplete information upon notification.

The new cases were mainly reported by three major sources: public hospitals, clinics and laboratories (43 cases); the DH's Social Hygiene Clinics (23 cases); and AIDS service organisations (14 cases). Also, 66 of the HIV-infected people (65 per cent) have already received HIV specialist services from the DH or the Hospital Authority.

In addition, 24 new cases of AIDS were reported in this quarter, of which 12 cases (50 per cent) were attributed to homosexual or bisexual contact and nine cases (38 per cent) were related to heterosexual contact. The route of transmission of three cases (13 per cent) has yet to be determined due to incomplete information upon notification. In this quarter, the most common AIDS-defining illness was *Pneumocystis pneumonia*, a kind of chest infection.

Since 1985, a cumulative total of 2 254 confirmed AIDS cases have been reported in Hong Kong.

The spokesman said, "HIV is the cause of AIDS and early HIV treatment with antiretroviral drugs helps prevent AIDS and its complications. It also significantly improves the quality of life and prolongs the survival of those infected. Notably, people with HIV who achieve sustained viral suppression to an undetectable level by antiretroviral drugs have no chance of passing on the virus through sex.

"Members of the public with a history of unsafe sex should take an HIV antibody test early. They can call the DH's AIDS Hotline (2780 2211) for a free, anonymous and confidential HIV test. HIV-positive people should seek specialist care as soon as possible."

The public may visit the following pages for more information on HIV/AIDS: the DH's 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).