

CHP reviews local HIV/AIDS situation in second quarter 2023

A total of 93 cases of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection were reported to the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) in the second quarter of 2023, taking the cumulative total of HIV infections reported locally to 11 830 since 1984.

Of the 93 additional cases involving 72 males and 21 females, 39 (41.9 per cent) acquired the infection via homosexual or bisexual contact, 31 (33.3 per cent) via heterosexual contact, and three (3.2 per cent) via injecting drug use. 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 four sources: public hospitals, clinics and laboratories (47 cases); private hospitals, clinics and laboratories (12 cases), the AIDS Unit under the DH (11 cases), and the Social Hygiene Clinics under the DH (11 cases). Also, 75 newly reported HIV-infected people (81.5 per cent) 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, 11 cases (45.8 per cent) were related to heterosexual contact, and one case (4.2 per cent) was associated with injecting drug use. The route of transmission of the remaining case has yet to be determined due to incomplete information. In this quarter, the most common AIDS-defining illness remained as Pneumocystis pneumonia. Since 1985, a cumulative total of 2 441 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. They can visit the AIDS Hotline website or call the 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).