

CHP reviews local HIV/AIDS situation in second quarter of 2020

A total of 141 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 second quarter of 2020, taking the cumulative total of HIV infections reported locally to 10 550 since 1984.

Reviewing the latest HIV/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) situation in Hong Kong, a spokesman for the DH today (August 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 141 HIV cases, involving 124 males and 17 females, reported in the above quarter, 79 acquired the infection via homosexual or bisexual contact, 24 via heterosexual contact and one via drug injection. The routes of transmission of the remaining 37 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 (71 cases); AIDS service organisations (22 cases); and the DH's Social Hygiene Clinics (20 cases). Also, 91 of the HIV-infected people (65 per cent) have already received HIV specialist services from the DH or the Hospital Authority.

In addition, 36 new cases of AIDS were reported in this quarter, of which 21 cases (58 per cent) were attributed to homosexual or bisexual contact and 13 cases (36 per cent) were related to heterosexual contact. The routes of transmission of two cases (6 per cent) have yet to be determined due to incomplete information upon notification. Since 1985, a cumulative total of 2 176 confirmed AIDS cases have been reported in Hong Kong.

In this quarter, the most common AIDS-defining illness was Pneumocystis pneumonia, a kind of chest infection.

The spokesman said, "HIV is the cause of AIDS and, without treatment, about half of HIV-infected people will progress to AIDS within 10 years. On the contrary, 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 by antiretroviral drugs have a negligible 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. 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).