

CHP reviews local HIV/AIDS situation in third quarter of 2018 (with photo)

A total of 156 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 third quarter of 2018, bringing the cumulative total of reported HIV infections to 9 543 since 1984.

Reviewing the latest HIV/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) situation in Hong Kong at a press conference today (November 27), the Consultant (Special Preventive Programme) of the CHP, Dr Kenny Chan, said that sexual transmission remained the major mode of HIV transmission.

Dr Chan stressed the importance of proper use of condoms in reducing the risk of contracting HIV. Men who have sex with men (MSM), who dominate the epidemic, are strongly urged to use a condom for safer sex.

"HIV is the cause of AIDS and, without treatment, about half of those with HIV will progress to AIDS within 10 years. However, early HIV treatment prevents AIDS and significantly prolongs survival," Dr Chan said, urging HIV-positive people to seek specialist care as soon as possible.

Of the 156 HIV cases, 133 males and 23 females, reported in the above quarter, 83 acquired the infection via homosexual or bisexual contact, 29 via heterosexual contact and one via injecting drug use. The routes of transmission of the remaining 43 cases have yet to be determined due to inadequate information.

The new cases were reported by three major sources: public hospitals and clinics (72 cases), private hospitals and clinics (27 cases), and the DH's Social Hygiene Clinics (21 cases). Among all newly reported cases, 111 (71 per cent) have already received HIV specialist services at the DH or the Hospital Authority.

In addition, 34 new cases of AIDS were reported in the above quarter, bringing the total number of reported AIDS cases to 1 959 since 1985. Among the new cases, 53 per cent were attributed to homosexual or bisexual contact and 44 per cent were related to heterosexual contact.

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

"Members of the public, particularly high-risk groups, should use the condom consistently and properly. Those with a history of unsafe sex should take an HIV antibody test early. People who use drugs should discontinue using drugs or receive methadone treatment instead. If injection of drug is unavoidable, do use disposable needle each and every time, and do not share or re-use needles. " Dr Chan said.

The public can call the DH's AIDS Hotline (2780 2211) for a free, anonymous and confidential HIV antibody test. The public may visit 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), the Gay Men HIV Information website (www.21171069.com) and the Harm Reduction website (www.harmreduction.gov.hk) for more information on HIV/AIDS.

