

CHP reviews local HIV/AIDS situation in third quarter of 2019

A total of 152 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 2019, bringing the cumulative total of reported HIV infections to 10 150 since 1984.

Reviewing the latest HIV/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) situation in Hong Kong at a press conference today (November 26), the Consultant (Special Preventive Programme) of the CHP, Dr Kenny Chan, said that sexual transmission remained the major mode of HIV transmission and stressed the importance of consistent and proper use of condoms in reducing the risk of contracting HIV.

"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," he continued.

Of the 152 HIV cases, involving 126 males and 26 females, reported in the third quarter, 71 acquired the infection via homosexual or bisexual contact and 38 via heterosexual contact. The routes of transmission of the remaining 43 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 (68 cases); the DH's Social Hygiene Clinics (29 cases); and private hospitals, clinics and laboratories (21 cases). Also, 102 of the HIV-infected people (68 per cent) have already received HIV specialist services at the DH or the Hospital Authority.

In addition, 24 new cases of AIDS were reported in this quarter, of which 16 cases (67 per cent) were attributed to homosexual or bisexual contact, and six cases (25 per cent) were related to heterosexual contact. The route of transmission of two cases (8 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 2 075 confirmed AIDS cases have been reported in Hong Kong.

"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 makes a significant contribution towards improving the quality of life and prolongs survival of those infected. Notably, people with

HIV who achieve sustained viral suppression through antiretroviral drugs have a negligible chance of passing on the virus through sex," Dr Chan said.

The DH will launch a new set of TV and radio Announcements in the Public Interest on antiretroviral treatment on this year's World AIDS Day (December 1) to enhance public awareness of HIV/AIDS.

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).