

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

A total of 125 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 2020, taking the cumulative total of HIV infections reported locally to 10 675 since 1984.

Reviewing the latest HIV/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) situation in Hong Kong, a spokesman for the DH today (November 24) 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 125 HIV cases, involving 96 males and 29 females, reported in the above quarter, 53 acquired the infection via homosexual or bisexual contact, 34 via heterosexual contact. The routes of transmission of the remaining 38 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 (62 cases); DH's Social Hygiene Clinics (18 cases) and private hospitals, clinics and laboratories (17 cases). Also, 81 of the HIV-infected people (65 per cent) have already received HIV specialist services from the DH or the Hospital Authority.

In addition, 32 new cases of AIDS were reported in this quarter, of which 16 cases (50 per cent) were attributed to homosexual or bisexual contact, 13 cases (41 per cent) were related to heterosexual contact. The route of transmission of three cases (nine per cent) has yet to be determined due to incomplete information upon notification. Since 1985, a cumulative total of 2 208 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. 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).