

Review of HIV/AIDS in 2018 (with photo)

A total of 624 additional cases of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection were reported to the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) in 2018, compared with 681 in 2017.

Reviewing the HIV/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) situation in Hong Kong at a press conference today (February 26), 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 consistent and proper use of condoms in reducing the risk of contracting HIV.

"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, HIV treatment prevents AIDS and significantly prolongs survival," he remarked.

"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," Dr Chan said.

Of the 624 newly added HIV cases, 530 males and 94 females, reported in 2018, 363 (58 per cent) acquired the infection via homosexual or bisexual contact, 138 (22 per cent) via heterosexual contact, and three (0.5 per cent) via drug injection. The routes of transmission of the remaining 120 cases have yet to be determined due to inadequate information.

In the fourth quarter of 2018, 172 new cases of HIV infection were reported, taking the cumulative total of HIV infections reported locally to 9 715 since 1984.

Of the 172 HIV cases, involving 148 males and 24 females, reported in the above quarter, 96 acquired the infection via homosexual or bisexual contact and 33 via heterosexual contact and two via drug injection. The routes of transmission of the remaining 41 cases have yet to be determined due to inadequate information.

The new cases of the above quarter were mainly reported by three major sources: public hospitals and clinics (80 cases); private hospitals, clinics and laboratories (30 cases); and AIDS service organisations (25 cases).

Of the newly reported cases in the above quarter, 128 of them (74 per cent) have already received HIV specialist services at the DH or the Hospital Authority.

In addition, 37 new cases of AIDS were reported in the above quarter, of which 19 cases (51 per cent) were attributed to homosexual or bisexual contact and 13 cases (35 per cent) were related to heterosexual contact. Since 1985, a cumulative total of 1 996 confirmed AIDS cases have been reported in Hong Kong.

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

The public may visit these 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.com).

