

CHP reviews local HIV/AIDS situation in first quarter of 2018

A total of 142 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 first quarter of 2018, bringing the cumulative total of reported HIV infections to 9 233 since 1984.

Reviewing the latest HIV/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) situation in Hong Kong at a press conference today (May 29), the Consultant (Special Preventive Programme) of the CHP, Dr Kenny Chan, said that sexual transmission remained the major mode of HIV transmission.

"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 prevents AIDS and significantly prolongs survival," he said, urging HIV-positive people to seek specialist care as soon as possible.

Dr Chan also 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.

Of the 142 HIV cases, 122 males and 20 females, reported in the above quarter, 71 acquired the infection via homosexual or bisexual contact, and 20 via heterosexual contact. The routes of transmission of the remaining 51 cases have yet to be determined due to inadequate information.

The new cases were reported by three major sources: public hospitals and clinics (64 cases), the DH's Social Hygiene Clinics (21 cases) and private hospitals and clinics (20 cases). Among them, 79 (58 per cent) have already received HIV specialist services at the DH or the Hospital Authority.

In addition, 28 new cases of AIDS were reported in the above quarter, bringing to 1 885 the total number of confirmed AIDS cases reported since 1985. Among the new cases, 71 per cent were attributed to homosexual or bisexual contact and 18 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.

The findings of the latest community-based HIV Prevalence and Risk Behavioural Survey of Men who have sex with men (PRiSM) conducted by the CHP in 2017 were also announced at today's press conference. PRiSM 2017, which was the fourth since the survey was first conducted in 2006, recruited some 4 100 MSM and 100 male-to-female transgender persons via websites, mobile applications, venues serving sexual minorities and AIDS organisations. Participants were asked to complete an online questionnaire on an anonymous, confidential and voluntary basis. Results of the latest PRiSM found that the

HIV prevalence for sexually active MSM was 6.54 per cent while that for male-to-female transgender women was 5.11 per cent. The HIV testing rate in the past 12 months among MSM (52.6 per cent) was higher than that of the last survey in 2011 (41 per cent).

Dr Chan pointed out that the percentage of consistent condom use (defined as using a condom every time) in the preceding six months among MSM remained unsatisfactory (52 per cent). The percentage of recreational drug/substance use before and during sex (commonly known as "chemsex") in the past six months (16.2 per cent) was higher than that of the previous round of PRiSM conducted in 2011 (12.3 per cent). Of note, "chemsex" increases the risk of transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections between sexual partners.

"With respect to the latest findings, we will step up our efforts in promotion and public education in the MSM community in order to make them aware of the importance of safe sex in preventing AIDS. We will also remind members of the public, particularly high-risk groups, to use a condom consistently and properly. Those with a history of unsafe sex should take an HIV antibody test early," Dr Chan said.

"Drug users should avoid sharing needles with others and receive methadone or other appropriate treatment as soon as possible," Dr Chan stressed.

Other findings and further details of the PRiSM survey have been uploaded to the DH's [Virtual AIDS Office](#). The public can call the DH's AIDS Hotline (2780 2211) for a free, anonymous and confidential HIV test. The public may visit 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.

[Spanish handcrafted leather brand Lottusse opens flagship store in Hong Kong \(with photo\)](#)

Lottusse, a Spanish handcrafted leather brand with its heritage dating back to 1877, opened its flagship retail store in Hong Kong today (May 29), as part of its regional business expansion via Hong Kong following its successful showroom operations in the city.

The new store is located at the newly reopened heritage site of the former Central Police Station and Victoria Prison compound. Lottusse, a Fluxa

family-owned handcrafted leather brand, takes quality at the heart of its business philosophy, according to the company's Asia Area Manager, Mr Yuji Yosumi.

In the retail shop, customers can order Lottusse shoes with personalisation options, which will then be handcrafted by masters at Lottusse's own factory based in Mallorca, Spain, so as to ensure the family craftsmanship tradition is strictly followed in detail. Customers can also buy ready-made shoes in a wide range of designs.

In 2014, the brand opened a showroom in Hong Kong where personalised shoes can be ordered. Mr Yosumi said the company sees good timing now to commence retail operations with the new shop in Central to tap Hong Kong's growing status as an international retail hub in the region.

He said, "Hong Kong as the gateway to Asia is the ideal place for us to test the markets in the region. We initially set up a showroom in the city four years ago and from there we have developed solid clientele from Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore through Hong Kong. It is the right time in the right place for us to move to the retail business with this new shop."

He added, "Hong Kong's retail industry is sophisticated with a good diversity of discerning clientele in terms of both locals and visitors from around the world. Our Hong Kong retail store not only manages the city's retail operations but also will develop wholesale business across Asia."

Associate Director-General of Investment Promotion Dr Jimmy Chiang welcomed the opening of Lottusse's flagship store in Hong Kong. He said, "It shows a vote of confidence in our retail industry. Apart from participating in the vibrant retail sector in Hong Kong, the brand can also make good use of the city's advantages including a free port, a low tax base and the absence of sales tax to expand its business in the region."

About Lottusse

Founded in 1877 in Mallorca, Spain, Lottusse is owned by the founding Fluxa family. Now under the fourth generation, the family business is an artisanal shoes manufacturer and international brand specialising in high-quality leather products. For more information, please visit www.lottusse.com.

About Invest Hong Kong

Invest Hong Kong is the department of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government to attract foreign direct investment and support overseas and Mainland businesses to set up or expand in Hong Kong. It provides free advice and customised services for overseas and Mainland companies enrolled as its clients. For more information, please visit www.investhk.gov.hk.

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For an event photo, please visit www.flickr.com/photos/investhk/albums/72157696752868034.



Tianjin Liaison Unit relocated to long-term office

The Tianjin Liaison Unit (TJLU) of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government moved into its long-term office today (May 29).

The Director of the TJLU, Mr Klaus Chan, said, "The TJLU's relocation to a new office will facilitate more efficient operation. The new office, still in the Heping district in Tianjin, is easily accessible by the general public and close to various departments of the Tianjin Municipal Government."

Set up under the Office of the Government of the HKSAR in Beijing, the TJLU, which commenced operation on February 27, 2017, strives to strengthen the HKSAR Government's connections with the Government of the Tianjin Municipality; enhance Hong Kong's economic and trade relations with Tianjin, including following up on policy development in relation to the co-ordinated development of Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei Province; organise activities to promote Hong Kong's advantages and the Mainland people's understanding of Hong Kong; and liaise with and provide support to Hong Kong enterprises as well as Hong Kong people living, working or studying in Tianjin.

The long-term office of the TJLU is located at Room 4404, Metropolitan Tower, 181 Nanjing Road, Heping District, Tianjin, China (Tel: (86-22) 6063 2988; fax: (86-22) 6063 2986; email: tjlu@bjo.gov.hk; website: www.bjo.gov.hk).

CHP reminds public on precautions against heat stroke during very hot weather

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (May 29) reminded members of the public, particularly those undertaking outdoor activities, to take heed of necessary measures against heat stroke and sunburn in very hot weather.

"The public should carry and drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration while engaging in outdoor activities," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"Those engaged in strenuous outdoor activities should avoid beverages containing caffeine, such as coffee and tea, as well as alcohol, as they speed up water loss through the urinary system," the spokesman explained.

"The obese, the sick, including those with heart disease or high blood pressure, the old and the young are more vulnerable to heat-related illnesses. They should pay special attention," the spokesman added.

The public should adopt the following precautions:

- Wear loose and light-coloured clothing to reduce heat absorption and facilitate sweat evaporation and heat dissipation;
- Avoid vigorous exercise and prolonged activities like hiking or trekking as heat, sweating and exhaustion place additional demands on the physique;
- Perform outdoor activities in the morning or late afternoon;
- For indoor activities, open all windows, use a fan or use air-conditioning to maintain good ventilation; and
- Reschedule work to cooler times of the day.

If working in a hot environment is inevitable, introduce shade in the workplace where practicable, and start work slowly and pick up the pace gradually. Get into a cool area for rest at regular intervals to allow the body to recuperate.

The public should also note the latest and the forecast Ultraviolet (UV) Index released by the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO). When the UV Index remains high (6 or above):

- Minimise direct exposure of the skin and the eyes to sunlight;
- Wear loose long-sleeved clothing made of close-woven fabrics;

- Wear a wide brim hat or use an umbrella;
- Seek a shaded area or put on UV-blocking sunglasses;
- Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen lotion with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or above. Apply liberally and reapply after swimming or sweating; and
- While using DEET-containing insect repellents for personal protection against mosquito-borne diseases, apply sunscreen first, then insect repellent.

If symptoms develop, such as dizziness, headache, nausea, shortness of breath or confusion, rest and seek help immediately, and seek medical advice as soon as possible.

The public may get more information from the DH's Health Education Hotline (2833 0111), [heat stroke](#) page and [UV radiation](#) page; the HKO's Dial-a-Weather (1878 200), latest [weather and forecast](#), [UV Index](#) and weather information for [hiking and mountaineering](#); and [press releases](#) of the Labour Department on precautions against heat stroke for outdoor workers and their employers when the Very Hot Weather Warning is in force.