Print Media

National HIV and AIDS Archives

#NationalHIVArchives

1st to 10th January 1987
Irish Times
2nd January 1987

AIDS

Sir, — May one ask if the AIDS disease can be transmitted by saliva? If so, what precautions, if any, are taken by the gardaí when breathalysing people?

The question is prompted after seeing on TV the British police breathalyse three motorists one after the other without cleaning the mouthpiece of the implement after each use.

And even if the outside is cleaned, wouldn't there remain the saliva trapped on the inside of the mouthpiece? — Yours, etc.,

LIAM DEEGAN,
68 Cappagh Avenue,
Finglas,
Dublin 11.
Aids campaign extends to TV and leafleting

By Jill Sherman

The first government leaflets giving detailed information on the risks of catching Aids will be pushed through millions of letter boxes on January 12.

The leaflet drop to 23 million households will be preceded by television advertisements on either Wednesday or Thursday next week.

The distribution of the leaflets, which is expected to take up to two weeks, will coincide with a cinema advertising campaign also starting on January 12. A second phase of television advertising will follow at the end of the month.

This new stage of the Government's £20 million education campaign on Aids is expected to be launched next week by Mr Norman Fowler, the Secretary of State for Social Services, to ensure additional media coverage.

The leaflets will reiterate messages in the Government's poster, radio and magazine campaign, and are unlikely to be more explicit, "We will be as explicit as we feel is necessary to get the message across," a Department of Health and Social Security spokesman said.

Yesterday the DHSS, doctors and Aids organizations were heartened by findings of a MORI poll commissioned by The Times, which indicates that people are beginning to change their sexual habits to protect themselves from Aids.

According to the poll 26 per cent of single men and women aged 18 to 29 are now more likely to use a condom, and 42 per cent of married couples are less likely to have affairs.

Most of the 1,093 adults polled also knew that the disease could be spread homosexually, heterosexually and through hyperdermic syringes.

But, the findings also showed that 50 per cent of the poll thought that Aids could be transmitted by saliva and significant numbers were less likely to give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation or help accident victims.

Specialists warned that the public needs more detailed information both about how the disease is spread and how to gain maximum protection.

Mr John Fitzpatrick, of the Terrence Higgins Trust, said: "The results are encouraging."

Letters

They seem to show that the message is getting through to a substantial proportion of the population.

"Now we need to refine this information so that people have a deeper knowledge of Aids. There is no evidence that Aids can be transmitted through saliva or through mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. People with Aids are not lepers,"

Dr John Gallwey, a genito-urinary physician at the Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford, pointed out that although the public was becoming more aware of Aids it was those least at risk who were now changing their behaviour.

Dr Gallwey holds a weekly special clinic to offer advice to people in high-risk groups or practising high-risk behaviour. "But those who come are typically couples who have been faithful to each other for three years and are worried about previous affairs."

Those who are promiscuous are not changing their behaviour, he said. The people who come to his sexually transmitted diseases (STD) clinic are not those that attend the special Aids clinic.

"Prostitutes or women from escort agencies come to the STD clinic and are amazed that they are at risk. These people never think it will happen to them."
AIDS—THE FACTS AND THE FALSEHOODS

AIDS is spreading like wildfire—it's a plague. NOT TRUE. The disease is a difficult one to catch. The number of known cases in the UK is at present relatively low. AIDS has the potential to become a major epidemic but it is not one yet.

AIDS threatens everyone—no one is safe. NOT TRUE. AIDS is an avoidable infection. Once people know the facts about it and how to make sure they do not expose themselves, they have nothing to fear. It is ignorance that is dangerous.

AIDS is caused by homosexuals. NOT TRUE. Forget all the scare stories you may have read about AIDS being a "gay plague." AIDS is a sexually transmitted disease spread by promiscuity. A person's sexual feelings and needs are not important—the way he or she behaves is. It is sleeping around with infected people that spreads AIDS.

AIDS can be picked up in public lavatories, from sharing glasses and dishes with infected people, from working with infected people, and so on. NOT TRUE. The disease is passed from one person to another via blood, or vaginal fluid or semen—the sticky liquid men produce when they have a sexual climax. So, sharing soiled needles, as drug addicts do, can spread it, and sharing sex can spread it. Ordinary social contact cannot.
partnership is also completely secure. This is the method of choice for very large numbers of people who do not share their sex with partners of whose previous sexual history they have inadequate knowledge and reassurance. Sheaths do not make it totally safe and reasonable to sleep around—but they do greatly reduce the risks which that sort of lifestyle can create.

If there are among your family and friends, people who sneer at this advice or who bring their shoulders and say, "It's not happening to me, (it's an idiotic attitude, but it's theirs) then they are seriously at risk.

If there are among them drug users who mainline (inject into a vein) and are not fussy about the sort of needles they use, then they, too, are at risk.

If you know someone who need blood products or a blood transfusion, there is no risk, because now all such products are carefully tested and screened for AIDS safety. That avenue has been well and truly blocked.

So how do you do if one of your family develops the illness? (And by the way, I have no intention of listing symptoms here, since all of them could be caused by much less worrying conditions, and watching for symptoms can make every normal person unnecessarily anxious to the point of neurosis.

First, both you and your family need to keep your heads and not panic. Being told that you have a positive result to a blood test (for AIDS) is obviously alarming but it does not necessarily mean an immediate death sentence. At the moment we don’t know how many people who pick up the virus will go on to develop the disease. Estimates vary a great deal but the commonest is up to 30 per cent, which means that 70 per cent will not get it. They will always be carriers, but found to live with themselves, but capable of infecting others. They must always be very sensitive about safe sex, and if they are women, get sensible advice about whether or not to get pregnant (there is some evidence that

babies born to carriers have a high risk of being infected) but will not necessarily suffer severely or have shortened lives.

If symptoms do appear, however, then the person you love will need what any ill person needs—care, attention and love; the assurance that all that can be done to make them comfortable will be done, and constant support. They may, during their particular illness, need to stay in a specialist hospital unit where they can be treated and enabled to return home. They need to feel that the people they care about care about them—and if it all sounds familiar to those people who have lived through relatives or friends suffering from cancer, motor neurone disease, heart disease or kidney failure, it's meant to.

They will know exactly what I am talking about, because this is the sort of care that families give such patients day in, day out all over the country. All such illnesses carry the same sort of pain and suffering—illness—but all can be eased by sensible measures, which remain the same whatever the disease.

Learn as much as you can about the condition your patient has. Doctors and nurses looking after them will give you some information, but there are also specialist self-help groups who can advise. In the case of AIDS, contact the Terrence Higgins Trust, 63 Aids, London WC1N 3XX. On their helpline, 01-833 2971, trained counsellors take calls from 7-10 a.m. weekdays, 3-10 p.m. weekends. Body Positive, at the same address, counsels those who have positive blood tests.

Talk as much as you can with the person who is ill. By "as much as you can" I mean as much as the patient wants. Sometimes it is useful to talk to a great deal about their feelings; sometimes they prefer to ignore their situation and talk about anything at all. It's important to let them do whatever they need to do.

Then, it is necessary to take good care of yourself. And that does not mean that you are at high risk of infection but that a single doctor or nurse looking after AIDS patients has yet caught it from their work. Of course, simple, obvious hygiene measures are needed, as with any home nursing, but they will be explained by the doctor responsible for the patient and need not be particularly onerous. But it is important that you, as carer, eat well and get enough rest, relaxation and support, because without it you can't give the care you want to and which your patient needs.

If you are of a religious faith, an acquaintance who has the infection, then do as any civilised and well-meaning person would communicate. Send cards and good wishes.

AIDS-afflicted friends need you—don’t turn away

Flowers, maybe, and above all, visit. And if the person who has the illness is able to get out and about, then take them out. (I know someone with AIDS. He's now going through a bad patch but, as soon as he's feeling fit, we go to a restaurant and eat and drink nice things and laugh and joke a lot; and I'm looking forward to it immensely, just as I would to any night out.) Oddly, caring for someone who is ill with AIDS is easier to cope with in some ways than living with a person who is only carrying the virus. That can feel like living with a time bomb (or a time bomb you just never in a way that, if you and your family are to stay happy together.

Again, the place to look for sources of guidance on how to handle it is among those people who have had treatment for life-threatening diseases. People, for example, who have had cancer removed and had follow-up treatment, and who must now go on living in the hope they will remain well, but with the knowledge that there is a possibility that the condition may recur. The positive AIDS sufferer is in precisely the same situation—and if cancer patients can cope as splendidly as vast numbers do, then be sure that AIDS patients can as well.

It is hard to persuade people to be open about their diagnosis with a person suffering from a dreadful disease; it sounds like whistling in the dark. But this disease, like so many of the previous ones, is not just as tolerant as tuberculosis, smallpox—one of the most ghastly diseases ever, now totally eradicated—poor, and many more.

We must not get fatalistic about this new one, because, let me remind you, it IS an avoidable illness. The most useful thing any of us can do now is not to worry about whether someone we love will catch this virus—but to make extremely sure that all of them know precisely how not to get it. And if that means telling in very direct terms about sexual matters you would prefer not to think of, or to discuss, then that's the way it has to be. Never forget that squeamishness can severely damage your health. And that of the people you love.

AIDS—the safe sex code

One. Always try to share sex with someone you know and can trust. I will tell you the truth about previous sexual adventures. REMEMBER, even if you are a virgin, if you have sex with a person who has had two or three previous partners or is a drug user who shares needles with others, you are in effect having sex with all of them as well. Lifelong commitment to a partner who also was a virgin when you started out together protects you not only from AIDS, but other illnesses, including cervical cancer, too.

Two. If you cannot be sure of your partner's sexual health (and he may have to admit doubts about his previous sexual partners, never have vaginal intercourse without using a sheath (or condom, rubber nipple or French letter)—what you want to call it.

Three. If you want to start a pregnancy with a man of whose sexual health you are unsure, it is reasonable to ask him to consider coming with you to a sexually transmitted diseases clinic (addresses in the phone book) for advice (and if necessary) a blood test. If he refuses, reconsider carefully. Women with AIDS have a high risk of passing the virus to their babies.

Four. If your partner has had previous bisexual experiences (and it is increasingly commoner than most women realise) during which he may have collected the AIDS virus, or if he injects drugs, be particularly careful. If he has been tested and has a positive reaction, you can still be lover, but should avoid intercourse and oral sex. Caressing and stroking, and the point of cunam is safe, as long as he wears a condom to contain the semen. Pregnancy is not safe for women with AIDS. The control of AIDS is not, ultimately, the responsibility of any government agency. It's your health—it's in your hands.
Plan to fight AIDS urged

THE TUC yesterday called for a major programme of action to combat AIDS — including the possible checking of everybody admitted to hospital to see if they are carrying the virus.

Many hospitals already assume that those taken to casualty departments have hepatitis "B" until proved otherwise, the TUC stated in evidence to a Commons social services committee inquiry into problems associated with AIDS.

"In the TUC's view, it may be necessary to consider whether the Health Service should assume that everyone admitted for treatment was infected with the AIDS virus as the spread of the disease accelerates," it added.

They also seek: Full protection of employment rights of AIDS patients and carriers; No discrimination against "high risk" groups at work or in the community; Introduction of random medical surveillance screening to monitor the progress of the disease. — (PA)
AIDS: needs to help control
addresses be given free

The key point is should

Can addicts help

nightmare

our drugs to slide to

continuous

new and

On the

BY EMANUEL O'NEILL

THE TIMES OF LONDON
Patient gets AIDS

A LEUKAEMIA patient given a blood transfusion in a Glasgow hospital has contracted the AIDS virus, health officials confirmed today. In one of only a handful of cases recorded in Britain, the infected blood was not detected by tests introduced nationally in 1985 because the donor had contracted the virus only recently. There is a period of about three months after infection in which existing tests cannot detect the virus, experts said.

Hospital authorities would not discuss the case on the grounds of patient confidentiality but confirmed: "There was a patient who had a bone marrow transplant who was HIV positive. It is believed this happened as a consequence of a blood transfusion." — (PA)
Alice Rawsthorn assesses the impact of Richard Branson’s Mates on the booming condom market

Converting a generation to the idea of insulated sex

WHEN Mr Richard Branson, the architect of the Virgin pop music empire, announced his intention to introduce Mates, a brand of condom, as a weapon in the battle against AIDS he threw the British condom market into turmoil.

Mates was conceived as an inexpensive form of contraception that would coax a new generation of young people to use condoms both as a form of birth control and as a barrier against AIDS, with profits from its sales ploughed into a campaign to raise awareness about the disease.

Yet Mates faced the task of transforming the condom — which until AIDS seemed doomed to be the least fashionable form of contraception — into an acceptable means of birth control for the young and sexually aware. Mates has now been marketed for more than two months and is being introduced to other countries this year.

The condom, or something very like it, has been one of the most common forms of contraception for centuries. Fish intestines and animal hide were used in its earliest guises. The more fastidious libertines of the 1700s and 1800s favoured silk.

It was in the 1930s that production of rubber condoms began. The first mass-manufactured condoms were developed in Germany. In the mid-1980s the London Rubber Company — now renamed London International — established a British production plant.

During the Second World War the LRC increased its share of the British market as the flow of imports from Germany ceased. When the British Government decreed that manufacturers using latex must restrict their output to a single product because of supply shortages, the LRC was the only company to choose condoms. Its Duralex brand has dominated the market since and before the launch of Mates claimed 65 per cent of all sales.

London International is also the leading player in the European market. Since its acquisition last year of HAPU-ICO, the largest Italian condom manufacturer, it has claimed 60 per cent of sales in western Europe. The US market is dominated by Carter-Wallace with its Trojan brand.

Over the years several companies have challenged Duralex. Warner-Lambert launched an ambitious assault with its Lifestyle condoms a few years ago, but two factors have inhibited prospective competitors.

First, the cost of bringing the market has been prohibitively high, given that condom sales were relatively small — just £23m in 1985 — and that it would require a heavy investment to outspend well-established brands like Duralex.

Second, condom sales have declined steadily since the introduction of the contraceptive pill in the early 1960s. The fall slowed down from the mid-1970s as concern grew about the pill's side-effects, but by 1985 only 11m condoms were sold in Britain.

Until AIDS, the condom was little more than the butt of "is there anything else, sir" adolescent jokes. However, the discovery that it could act as a barrier against AIDS has encouraged sales throughout the world.

From the outset the Virgin Foundation emphasised that Mates was a product designed to increase the condom market by drawing in younger consumers, not to steal sales from competitors.

Initial research suggests it may have succeeded. Mr John Jackson, chief executive of Mates Healthcare, says that 30m Mates have been sold since mid-October and that sales are 50 per cent above target.

The established condom companies, even London International, have been faced with the unenviable prospect of competing against a cheaper product with the advantage of charitable status.

Yet so far the competitors seem to have emerged unscathed. London International says its sales growth has continued since the Mates launch.
BBC launches new radio campaign against AIDS

A NEW campaign to alert people about the dangers of AIDS was launched yesterday by the BBC and the British Medical Association.

Presenters at the 32 BBC local radio stations in England will warn against the dangers of promiscuity and unprotected sex and explain how AIDS can and cannot be transmitted.

The broadcasts will begin next Monday to coincide with the Department of Health and Social Security’s national AIDS leaflet delivery to 23 million households.

BBC chiefs have agreed that explicit language should be used by presenters to ensure listeners understand the health messages. They believe AIDS poses such a horrendous threat that it is more important to be clear than tasteful, although they hope they will not cause offence.

The BBC and BMA have jointly produced a leaflet dealing with questions and answers on AIDS. Called “AIDS” — Are you at Risk? it will be distributed by local radio stations as part of the campaign.

The leaflet warns: “We appear to be just at the beginning of what the experts fear will be a major epidemic — the greatest public health problem of the century.

“The number of reported cases in Britain rose from three in 1982 to over 600 by the end of last year. If present trends continue, there will be more than 10,000 cases by 1990. The worldwide forecast is 4.7 million cases within ten years.”

The BBC said a special AIDS Helpline, set up last month for the BBC’s campaign on Radio 1, 2 and 4, was being extended to cope with calls for listeners to local radio.

Radio Scotland, Radio Wales and Radio Ulster will also be looking at the problem of AIDS over the next few months. — (PA)
Blood donor advice attacked

The AIDS controversy took a new turn last night, with an attack on the British Medical Association for saying that anyone who had had casual sex in recent years should not give blood.

The British Government's chief medical officer, Sir Donald Acheson, said the BMA warning would almost certainly cause a shortage of blood — quite unnecessarily.

"The result of that would be a very serious one. You would have people who needed blood transfusion not having the blood," Sir Donald told ITN.

Dr Harold Gunson, consultant adviser in blood transfusion to the Health Department, said the BMA idea "goes too far at the present time. It would cause us a serious loss of blood donors."

The Terrence Higgins Trust, a charity named after the first Briton to die of AIDS, said the suggestion was "unnecessarily broad, and could severely limit the supply of blood".

The DHSS also joined in the criticism, saying: "There is no point in creating a shortage in the supply of blood needed by excluding donors unnecessarily."

The BMA call came from the head of its professional division, Dr John Dawson, who said anyone who had slept around promiscuously in the past four years should think carefully before donating blood.

They could not be absolutely certain their sexual partners were not in one of the high risk AIDS categories, and might therefore become infected themselves and carry the virus in their blood, he said.

The current advice is that people should not give blood if they are homosexual, take drugs intravenously, are haemophiliacs, come from central Africa, or have had sex with anyone in these high risk categories.

Dr Dawson said the list should be extended to cover people who have had casual sex, because their sexual partner might be in one of these categories. — (PA)
Blood transfusion service and BMA clash over Aids

By Thomson Prentice, Science Correspondent

A clash on Aids guidelines developed yesterday between the British Medical Association and the National Blood Transfusion Service over who should or should not donate blood.

The disagreement could lead to public confusion and alarm, and "decimate" the number of donors coming forward, an expert in the transfusion network said. Both organizations conceded that their differences were "regrettable".

The association said that any man or woman who had had a casual sexual relationship in the past four years should not offer blood, in conflict with the transfusion service's own advice which only excludes specific, high-risk groups.

The association also said that it could see no reason why male homosexuals who had been in a monogamous relationship for eight years or more should not donate blood.

However, a leaflet from the transfusion service insists that no homosexual man should give blood.

The disagreement occurred despite the efforts of both organizations to provide clear advice about the risks associated with the disease.

It overshadowed the association's announcement of a collaboration with BBC local radio stations in which AIDS education programmes will be combined with a new information leaflet.

Experts in the blood transfusion service have been worried about the potential shortage of donors that could result from the current advice to "high-risk" groups such as homosexuals, intravenous drug abusers and their sexual partners not to offer blood. A 15 per cent drop in London blood stocks has already resulted.

But they are also anxious to prevent any Aids-infected blood slipping through the existing screening system and being used in a transfusion.

Such a case was reported at the weekend in Glasgow, where a man suffering from leukaemia became infected after being given blood. That was a "million to one chance", a transfusion specialist said yesterday.

Donated blood is routinely

Continued on page 16, col 1
AIDS morality

THREE letters from readers in the Sunday In-
dependent (28/12/86) have
one thing in common —
the Promotion of
ignorance in the name of
religion!

Fr. S. Domnick
Johnson and Patrick
O'Conner along with a G.
Glenon tried their best
to show Mary Kenny
where she was wrong in
her interpretation of
Church law, etc.

The issue is AIDS, and
how best to prevent it.
These gentlemen (at least
two unmarried) appealed
to "authority" to win
adherents to their views.
This is always employed when
logic is missing.

We were told by them
that a person must choose
a disease rather than use
a condom, also "it is
never right to do a bad
action" (inferring that to
use a condom is a "bad
action").

Would these people
please give us a break
from such unadulterated
nonsense?

It is far worse to
sexually abuse a child and
rob her of her God-
ordained innocence than
to steal some object from
a church. What about the
politics of frustration when
it comes to equal food
distribution? Explain the
tormented reasons why
most churches sanction
war?

Or an easier example; a
woman is drowning in a
river beside a sports shop
which happens to be
closed. However, in the
window is a life jacket ...
would these
righteous people refuse to
break the window and
technically steal and break
the law and save a life or
by their own reasoning
"even if we have the best
of intentions it is never
right to do a bad action"
allow the poor woman to
drown?

Finally a sinister but
very real situation: a
woman is aware of her
husband's constant in-
fidelities. There is the
strong possibility of her
contracting an infection
eventually. But we are
told that for her to be
right with her Maker, she
has to choose disease

Is it any wonder so
many young people are
turning their backs on
Christianity when it is
presented to them in such
ridiculous terms?

JOHN J. MAY
Co. Dublin.
No jail while he has AIDS

A man dying from AIDS was sentenced in Los Angeles yesterday to 15 years in prison for mail fraud and racketeering, but he will not have to serve a day as long as his life is threatened by the disease.

The judge placed Sheldon Block (36) on five years' probation and ordered that his prison sentence be stayed until he is cured of AIDS or until it is determined that his life is no longer threatened.

He also must forfeit $2.2 million in property to the US government, pay a $250,000 fine and $50,000 restitution to his victims. Block pleaded guilty to 76 counts of mail fraud and racketeering in connection with a $30-million telephone marketing scheme.
A sister for the dying

London Times
7th January 1987

A sister for the dying

Britain's first hospital ward devoted to AIDS patients is due to open on Monday next week.

Sally Brompton meets the woman chosen - from an unusually large number of applicants - to run it

Jacqui Elliot considers working with AIDS sufferers no more distressing than nursing renal patients, who are forced to use her love and care to ease their pain. "For them, the most distressing thing is the uncertainty," she says.

The 25-year-old nurse was picked, without competition, for the post of sister at the new ward, in the new 12-bedded Clinical Research Unit at the Middlesex Hospital. She was chosen for the unusual role of sister, and her job will be to care for the patients, and to develop the ward's first nurse, as well as being involved in the research that goes on there.

"It's not so much a job as a career," she says. "I've always been interested in research, and I've always been interested in AIDS."

She was chosen because of her experience in AIDS research, and her background in nursing. "I've always been interested in research, and I've always been interested in AIDS."

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The ward will have 12 beds, and will be run by a team of five nurses, led by a consultant in infectious diseases. There will also be a team of doctors, including a consultant in infectious diseases, and a team of nurses, including a sister in charge.

The ward is part of the hospital's new research unit, which aims to develop new treatments for AIDS. "It's not just about treating the disease, it's about preventing it," she says.

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Aids: time for a moral renaissance

by Cardinal Basil Hume

Some people have claimed that the AIDS epidemic is God's punishment of a sinful world. It is better seen as proof of a general law that actions have consequences. In the case of AIDS, the consequences are destruction and death. Aids is neither the whole nor central issue. It is a symptom of something deeper and more deadly. Aids is but one of the many disastrous consequences of promiscuous sexual behaviour. Promiscuity is the root cause of the present epidemic. It has been slow to respond, but it is rapidly becoming suicidal.

Here, then, dealing with an institutionally moral issue and not with drug addicts, restrictions on needle use and on sexual restraint be backed when there is on all sides explicit encouragement to promiscuous behaviour and frequent ridicule of moral values? Society is in moral disarray, for which we must all take our share of blame. Sexual promiscuity reflects a general decline of values.

Some might question whether any consensus on values is possible in a society which has so lost touch with its cultural, religious and spiritual roots. None the less, I am convinced that there are untapped reserves of goodness and idealism in many individuals and communities. Laying the foundations for a new consensus will be a long and arduous task, but one that is not impossible.

The search for a better way, for example, the need to reconstruct society's attitudes to work and values, is a way to God. It enriches the human personality. In married love a couple come together in a lifelong, life-giving union in which they give themselves totally and exclusively to each other. To be fully human and self-giving, that love has to remain open to the possibility of new life. It provides the stability and affection necessary for the nurturing and development of the growing child. For all these reasons, the full sexual expression of love is reserved for husband and wife within marriage.

The Roman Catholic Church, therefore, cannot be expected to lend its support to measures which tacitly accept, even if they do not encourage, sexual activity outside marriage. To do so would be inconsistent. It would weaken our primary witness to the Christian vision of human love and marriage. Nor do we accept that for the unmarried the choice lies solely between condoms and infection. There is a third course of action: refusal to engage in extra-martial sexual activity. Such self-discipline is not emotionally destructive, but can be a positive affirmation of a radical ideal, demanding but not impossible.

The Roman Catholic Church is committed to the cause of marriage and family life. It is a sad reflection on present values that no political party offers a coherent and comprehensive policy to sustain and uphold family life. Here there is much common ground to be explored. It is essential to enhance the quality of individual and family life.

A change in popular attitudes is possible, indeed necessary. Many in recent years have become convinced of the need to embrace a simpler, healthier lifestyle in order to enjoy a fuller, longer life. We are already changing, deep-rooted habits in eating, drinking, smoking, exercise. How much more change we need in society also needs a comprehensive campaign of public education and persuasion.

The Aids crisis represents a watershed for contemporary society. It is much more than a matter of sexual morality. Shared moral values derive from accepted understandings of society. Fear may well induce some to modify their sexual behaviour. That is not enough, however, to achieve that radical renewal of society which is so clearly needed. The necessary steps should be taken, I would suggest, in an atmosphere of calm and trust and in a spirit of dialogue and hope. There is much to be done in the home, in schools and in every part of our life and work together. Parents, teachers, clergy, communicators, those in power and position, should have shared responsibility to discover new hope and a better way.
Church 'snubs' priests dying from AIDS virus

AT LEAST 12 Catholic priests have contracted AIDS in America, it has been revealed.
Some have been disowned by their orders or sent away to be treated in secret for the virus, which affects mainly homosexuals.

Benedictine Brother Mario Riveccio, 37, who has AIDS, said yesterday:

"The church has to acknowledge that the religious aren't immune. And they know darn well that clergymen, gay or straight, aren't always celibate.

"I don't think they are dealing with reality."

One AIDS expert said:
"There are an awful lot of men in that profession who test positive for the virus."
Today
7th December 1987

Doctors stand by Aids blood alert

THE British Medical Association yesterday stood by its advice that anyone who has had an affair in the past four years should not give blood.

The doctors' organisation repeated its warning issued on Monday, despite strong criticism from blood transfusion service experts and the DHSS.

BMA chiefs now admit privately that their advice was based on a misunderstanding of existing guidelines, but won't back down.

While the transfusion service warns off members of specific high-risk groups and their sexual partners, the BMA warning includes anyone who has been promiscuous.

But, after some thought, BMA chiefs decided to maintain the tougher line, on the grounds that no-one can be sure of the sexual history of a number of partners.

A spokesman said: "We stand by what we said. It goes further than any advice so far, but since we've said it we are sticking to it."

"We don't accept any more that only the high risk groups should not give blood. The risk from heterosexual people may be minute, but we should consider ways of cutting out even small risks."

The DHSS chief medical officer Sir Donald Acheson says the new BMA advice goes too far, and blood transfusion chiefs have said it is unnecessary, and likely to lead in a drastic drop in donors.
Doctors back down in AIDS blood row

By JOHN ILMAN, Medical Correspondent

AIDS campaign doctors yesterday climbed down over their controversial advice to people not to give blood if they had had casual sex over the last four years.

The request from the British Medical Association infuriated health chiefs, who feared it could lead to a blood shortage and put at risk thousands of patients who need vital transfusions.

BMA officials insisted their advice was correct, but yesterday they were so concerned at the confusion caused to Britain's two million blood donors that they contacted the Government's Chief Medical Officer Sir Donald Acheson.

Sir Donald met them for more than an hour and was said to have 'jumped on them from a great height.' He has repeatedly made it clear that men and women who are not in the main risk groups, and who have had more than one sexual partner in recent years, should continue to volunteer to give blood if they wish.

After the meeting the BMA withdrew its advice, but warned people who have had casual sex to 'think carefully' before donating blood. They maintained that promiscuous people will not always know their partners' sexual histories, and therefore might sleep with someone in one of the high-risk groups.

In a joint statement with the Department of Health, the BMA agreed with the Government that the risk of a patient receiving blood contaminated with the AIDS virus is less than one in a million.

The statement added: 'It is vitally important that this risk should remain negligible.
So far the guidelines to donors, combined with testing, have proved highly effective in safeguarding this position. The BMA fully supports these guidelines and regrets that its views have been misunderstood.'

Two haemophiliac schoolboys have contracted the AIDS virus.
The boys, from Bradford, West Yorkshire, are believed to have been infected by the Factor 8 blood clotting agent imported from the United States before screening began.

Education director Mr Richard Knight said: 'These children must be allowed to lead as normal a life as possible. There is no danger to anyone they may come into contact with.'
The TV soaps at war

CROSSROADS CHIEF HITS EASTENDERS FOR ‘CHEAP’ STUNT OVER AIDS DEATH

By PATRICK HILL

CROSSROADS producer Bill Smithurst last night attacked his rivals at EastEnders over their plans to introduce an AIDS storyline into their soap opera. He said it would only fuel public panic over the disease and was a cheap way of increasing viewers.

Mr Smithurst, who plans to introduce his own AIDS story line by killing more than half his cast, added: "You don't have to have stories about rape, murder and AIDS in a show which is supposed to be entertaining.

It was revealed last week that EastEnders' bosses intend to introduce an AIDS storyline and one of the central characters would die from the disease."

Mr Smithurst, former producer of The Archers, added: "They are simply dwelling on people's fears to gain audiences. My programme will be about normal, everyday life. You don't need to have AIDS."

To make Crossroads more of a threat to EastEnders, 12 of the regular cast of 30 are to go. Mr Smithurst has also brought in his new team of scriptwriters from The Archers.

Identity

He believes the new look series should go back to its roots away from the glossy image which is aimed for but never achieved.

A new line up of characters will be led by award-winning National Theatre actor Trevor Howie, who used to be in the classic NHS pilot series Doctor Finlay. As well as being a doctor, he plays hard rock singer turned politician, a role taken over the recent with his partner wife Mart, played by British Shakespeare actress Frances Caine.

And there is a surprise return for 15-year-old Lee George, who took the role of Kerri's cousin Tony until 1992, was snatched from the show in 1993, Reid said: "It's wonderful to be back."

Mr Smithurst added: "I felt the main problem with Crossroads was that it had lost its identity. Everyone knows Crossroads is set in Manchester and EastEnders is set in London now I want Crossroads to reflect life in the Midlands with three local characters.

"I hope we can't maintain viewers, but also win back some lost core repeat viewers. In six months Crossroads will not recognize Crossroads."

JOHN COLLINS

Alexis and Blake to kiss and make up

TV's most bitter enemies are at last going to settle their differences.

Slightly successful Alex Smith, played by Joanne Tasker, and the ever-reticent Blake Austin, will fall madly in love.

Their romance will be an epic to be seen next week in Dreams, Blake, shocked by Joanne's fits, confesses a love to try to keep the pretty girl with him.

But Joanne, heartbroken, tries to commit suicide. Blake's response is to hold her hand and promise to be there for her forever, she will try to kill herself and is revealed to be Alexis.

The romantic plot is a brilliant attempt by the soap's producers to halt flagging audience numbers.

JOHN FORSYTH
AIDS fear sparks condoms boom

By GORDON PATERSON

Condom sales are soaring in Ireland because of increased fears of catching the deadly AIDS virus, according to medical experts.

And one specialist in the field, Dr. Robert Crowe, admits that more women are going into chemist shops to buy the traditional male contraceptive.

Figures to be published shortly by the Department of Health will show a noticeable decrease in the number of sexually transmitted diseases being detected because people are becoming more aware of the AIDS threat.

"Bluntly, women are thinking twice about contraception," said Dr. Crowe, the Limerick-based secretary of the Society of Sexually Transmitted Diseases in Ireland. "Not only are they remaining on the pill, but many of them are buying condoms for their husbands."

"People are also presenting themselves less often to STD clinics and those who do are finding that they are showing a clean bill of health. However, there is no room for complacency."

Meanwhile, a major new strategy to fight the scourge is being drawn up by the Department of Health and it will be launched shortly. Special accommodation and facilities are also being considered by Eastern Health Board chief executive officer Barry Seagrave.

Latest figures available, according to the Irish Medical Times, show that a total of 321 cases of the virus have been reported in Ireland — of which eight people have died.

And of 1,543 drug abusers tested, 21 p.c. were virus positive.

Dr. Crowe said he was "perfectly happy" with Health Minister Barry Desmond's plans to shortly launch a campaign warning of the AIDS threat. "People appear to be exercising more caution as far as casual sex is concerned," he added.
NEW AIDS ADVANCE
BY DUBLIN DOCTOR

THURSDAY, JANUARY 8, 1987

RESEARCH by a Dublin-based doctor into an anti-cancer drug may help patients who are found to have AIDS antibodies, it was disclosed today.

The findings of Professor Douglas Thorner of the Republic of Ireland have been put into effect in an American clinic in a desperate attempt to curb the virus that is sweeping the United States.

The possibility of a breakthrough by Prof. Thorner came during research into the treatment of a disease affecting dogs known as Fading Puppy Syndrome, which is similar to the deadly AIDS disease in humans.

Prof. Thorner said the most important aspect of the breakthrough was the fact that an animal model had been discovered on which doctors could work to help patients who were AIDS-positive.

The findings had already been sent for publication, he added.

Medical experts in Germany were 'happy' with the discoverer, as there had been a problem in finding a model suffering from a disease similar to AIDS on which to carry out research, he said. "But it is only the beginning. These are very early days yet," he added.

Prof. Thorner explained that Fading Puppy Syndrome is found in rabbits and is passed on in the uterus to the pups. The offspring are born without an immune system and normally die soon after birth.

According to Dr. Padraig Wall of Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda, Prof. Thorner, an immunologist, has been researching the drug Bem cageo to see if it affects patients whose own defence mechanisms had broken down.

Dr. Wall said he had been treating Fading Puppy Syndrome for some time without success. He approached Prof. Thorner who helped him start a trial on 70 dogs, using the anti-cancer drug.

Within two years they had brought the mortality rate among dogs suffering from the disease down by almost 80 per cent.

Dr. Wall added that the project, which had worked with Bem cageo for the past 20 years, linked the dogs and AIDS.

He received a warning as a consequence of the findings during a conference held by the manufacturers of the drug in Germany two weeks ago. The findings caused such an outcry among doctors at the conference that two American experts immediately established a clinic using the drug on their return to the U.S.

"Thereby in medicine interested in AIDS. Since the conference, the drug's manufacturer has licensed onto Prof. Thorner's suggestion and they are now working on the subject. It is a pity that we are not treating AIDS-positive people in Ireland because this is where the research was started," said Dr. Wall.

A total of 14 cases of the disease have been diagnosed in Ireland to date, with eight of those resulting in death. It is understood that the total number of confirmed cases of the infection is now 621.
New York Aids toll up sharply

New York (AP) - AIDS claimed 2,139 lives in New York City in 1986, an increase of more than 800 over the previous year.

The New York Times reported that at least 2,790 AIDS cases were diagnosed in 1986, compared with 2,062 in 1985, bringing the city's total to 8,681 cases and 4,914 deaths since the disease was first detected in 1981.

New York City's total cases represent 31.7 per cent of the nation's total of 29,803, according to the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta. San Francisco has the second greatest number of cases with 2,912.

"The fact that it's not a geometric increase shouldn't lull anyone," said Dr Rand I. Stoneburner, head of New York City Health Department's AIDS unit. "It's distressing that it continues to increase."

Health officials are particularly concerned about the prolonged latency of AIDS. Researchers warn that those who carry the virus may harbour and transmit the virus for years without having symptoms.

Dr Stoneburner said cases contracted by heterosexual partners of AIDS carriers rose from 1.4 per cent in 1985 to 2.2 per cent in 1986.
Aids, morals and taking care

From Mr. John Pilgrim

Sir, While the results of The Times MORI poll (January 1) may provide evidence of greater security from Aids for the majority of the population and of changed attitudes to sexual behaviour in general as a result of Aids, it would be dangerous to assume that it provides any evidence of changed behaviour or reduced risk for the minority who are most in danger from the disease.

As with other diseases in which there is a strong social factor, there is likely to be a number of behavioural elements which contribute to the degree of risk experienced in sexual promiscuity or shared hypodermic syringes in drug-taking.

To be more sure of the relevance of the MORI poll findings one would in particular wish to see more intensive study carried out among the young urban population, with particular attention to factors possibly associated with sexual promiscuity and drug-taking, including homelessness and unemployment.

One would, moreover, wish to see any attitudinal or behavioural study correlated with voluntary screening for Aids, which should in any case be most easily available and its availability known to high-risk groups.

Perhaps the most important conclusion from the MORI poll is that most people know of the causes of Aids and react with common sense in seeking to avoid them. It is probable, on this evidence, that those at greatest risk of contracting or spreading Aids would, given sufficient knowledge and access, react with similar common sense in making use of a voluntary screening service.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN PILGRIM,
Old Bishill House,
Bowlish,
Shepton Mallet, Somerset.

From Mr. Patrick Duffy, MP for Sheffield Attercliffe (Labour)

Sir, Whether the Government's campaign against Aids is effective remains to be seen, but the omens are not good. An adequate response is unlikely to be achieved by extortations, warnings, advertising techniques or a generally utilitarian approach.

The current campaign against smoking and drugs points to the limitations of deterrence. Something else then is needed to reinforce the DHSS campaign, and I take this to be implicit in the findings of the MORI poll published in The Times today. Fifty-eight per cent... said Britain would only avoid a major Aids epidemic if traditional family values were upheld.

I know that many parents in my Sheffield (Attercliffe) constituency feel a desperate need for a greater emphasis on such a pastoral approach, not with the view to arriving at moral judgments, but indicating moral choices. For they firmly believe that in the end Aids raises moral questions relating to the sanctity of the family and the renewed need for moral and religious teaching in our schools.

This suggests some responsibility at local community level, as well as at central government. Is there not a role then for local authorities to reinforce the work of their local health authorities?

Where such an elected body can see its way towards the local mobilisation of resources and agencies for the purpose of reinforcing that work, filling the moral void, initiating and pointing towards more wholesome and socially acceptable behavioural changes, I hope there will be a supportive response. I have asked the Prime Minister today if she will consider instructing the Secretaries of State for the Social Services, the Environment and Education to provide the appropriate co-ordination.

Yours sincerely,
PATRICK DUFFY,
House of Commons.
January 1.

From the Reverend Professor J. W. Bewick

Sir, The recent disagreement between the BMA and the National Blood Transfusion Service has created a totally different anxiety among some people (to judge from phone calls and letters) to the effect that if those in risk groups have been or are donating blood, other donors may receive the virus from the equipment used.

The widest possible publicity needs to be given to the fact that this cannot happen because the equipment used is discarded on each occasion that blood is taken.

Your own report (January 6) makes it clear how great the threat to the transfusion services is from the decline in donors. This unnecessary fear needs to be removed at once, and beyond that, it becomes an even deeper moral obligation on those who know they have not been in the risk categories to come forward as donors.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN BOWKER (President),
Christian Action on Aids,
Trinity College, Cambridge.
January 6.

From Mr. Anthony Hymon

Sir, Following well publicised examples of infection, people will soon be refusing transfusion for fear of contracting Aids. Also, pressures on the blood transfusion service are heavy.

A partial remedy exists for both problems. If patients undergoing elective surgery could give, in appropriate cases, a pint of their own blood for use in emergency it would not have to be screened, while there could be no danger of cross-infection. Three weeks before an operation should usually suffice for the patient's haemoglobin level to return to normal.

Such measures are urgently needed to maintain confidence in the medical services. This facility has long been used by a knowledgeable few. It should now be made available to the many.

Yours etc,
ANTHONY HYMAN,
38A Downshire Hill;
Hampstead, NW3.
January 6.
Doctors back down over Aids warning

DOCTORS' leaders yester-
day retracted their con-
troversial advice
over Aids and giving
blood.

The British Medical As-
sociation had warned donors
not to give blood if they had
had casual sex in the past
four years.

The advice caused a storm
of protest from the transfu-
sion service, and angered
DHSS chief medical officer
Sir Donald Acheson.

Yesterday, after a lengthy
debate the BMA council
voted to retract the advice.

Privately BMA leaders
were wishing the statement
had never been made, but in
public they presented a
united front.

They decided the guide-
lines — originally made in
an off-the-cuff remark by
the group's scientific under-
secretary Dr John Dawson
— would do more harm than
good.

They were worried that
the advice would confuse
the public and lead to a drop
in urgently-needed blood.

But BMA chairman Dr
John Marks was reported to
be "furious" at the remarks,
believing they made the as-
sociation look foolish.

Although criticised by se-
nior colleagues, Dr Dawson,
a rising star in the BMA, is
not expected to resign.

During the council debate
one BMA heavyweight, sec-
cretary Dr Tony Reable Eli-
lot, defended Dr Dawson
and members applauded.

Addicts

The blood transfusion
service advises only those in
high risk groups, such as
gay men or drug addicts, to
refrain from giving blood.

And chief medical officer
Sir Donald Acheson said
that the risk of receiving
blood contaminated with
Aids was only one in a mil-
lion.

Just four out of 3 million
pints of blood from people
outside the high risk groups
had been found with the
virus.

A DHSS spokeswoman
said the BMA retraction
had been agreed with the
Health Department.
ELANS first nationwide AIDS campaign, is to be launched before the end of the month.

The Dept. of Health - Health Education Bureau run campaign is almost ready and final details are at present being worked out with Health Minister Barry Desmond.

At least three top Dublin advertising agencies have made presentations for the campaign account - valued at over £250,000.

The AIDS education campaign will take the form of newspaper, radio and television advertisements and will initially cost over £250,000 over three months.

The decision on which advertising agency clinches the lucrative campaign, which has been in preparation since early December, is to be announced next Monday or Tuesday.

Unlike the British Government's AIDS campaign, it is understood that the forthcoming Irish campaign will not include leaflet drops to homes, warning of the spread of the disease.

From next Monday, every home in Britain and Northern Ireland will receive a leaflet, entitled 'AIDS - Don't Die of Ignorance', as part of the British public education campaign on the disease.

It is understood that the basic message of the AIDS campaign will be on the "one person-one partner" theme and will include advice on the use of condoms.

And if Belfast people have been warned of the high risk of catching AIDS in Dublin by the North's campaign coordinator Prof. David Simpson.
AIDS carriers not notified

BLOOD donors whose donations are discovered to have AIDS antibodies are not informed of the fact, the Blood Transfusion Board confirmed to The Irish People this week. They further confirmed that this is different to the practice in Britain, where AIDS anti-body carriers are personally notified.

Instead the donor’s doctor is notified in due course. But in a situation where a person has changed their doctor, or address, or does not list or contact a doctor, it is possible that many months could pass before information on their condition is received by them. This creates a substantial and unnecessary risk that they will transmit the virus in the meantime.

The situation is further evidence of confusion in co-ordination in the fight against AIDS here, where over 500 people have already been confirmed to carry the virus.

The Department of Health and Health Education Bureau are currently preparing a public awareness campaign on the AIDS threat, due to be launched at the end of January.

“It is vital, however, that information given be explicit and avoid any vagueness or generality,” Workers’ Party Health spokesperson Dr John McManus warned this week.

“Just because the disease hasn’t yet reached epidemic proportions as in the US doesn’t mean we don’t face a potentially similar crisis here within a few years — the information battle should be fought not when the situation deteriorates,” he argues.

It is now believed the main risk in the spread of the AIDS virus is through intravenous drug users, who are usually young, lack motivation to protect themselves or others, are more likely to be sexually active and may be involved in prostitution.

In other countries authorities have agreed to issue free syringes to these and other high risk categories in a move putting practical prevention before legal or moral considerations.

- In Ireland so far the gay community is one of the few areas where a comprehensive information and prevention campaign has been launched. Before Christmas, Gay Health Action published an Information pack on AIDS, which includes a highly detailed 44 page ‘Medical Answers on AIDS’ booklet published in the US, and details on the exact level of risk from various sexual activities.

The group also call for information aimed at the general public and a further campaign geared to specific high risk groups, which they say should involve those working in the areas targeted.

“Even based on current statistics we will have a new case of AIDS every week in the coming year. But based on rates elsewhere, figures can double every six months,” Gay Health Action point out.

Their booklet, price £1.50, is available through The Bookshop, 30 Gardiner Place, 10 Fownes Street, Dublin 2, and 24 Sullivan’s Quay, Cork city.
Cancer drug break in AIDS fight

RESEARCH by two Irish doctors into an AIDS-like disease affecting dogs may help people with AIDS antibodies, it was revealed yesterday. The dogs were treated with a drug normally used to fight cancer in humans.

Already, the findings of Prof. Douglas Thorne, of the Richmond Hospital, have been used in an American clinic. His breakthrough came during research into the treatment of a disease affecting dogs known as Feding Puppy Syndrome, which is similar to the deadly AIDS virus.

Dr. Paddy Wall of Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda, said he had been treating the syndrome for some time without success. He had approached Prof. Thorne who helped him start a trial on 70 dogs using the anti-cancer drug, Benzopyrone. Prof. Thorne has been working with it for the past 20 years.

Within two years, they had brought the mortality rate among dogs suffering from the disease down by almost 80%, and Professor Thorne had made a link between the syndrome and AIDS.

The drug stimulates T-lymphocytes, which are "like soldiers in the body forming the first line against the disease," said Dr. Wall who added that AIDS attacks kills the T-lymphocytes but the drug may be able to stimulate the defence system and help reject the virus.

"We have not really found a cure for full-blown AIDS. The drug will be tried on AIDS-positive people and if it does work, it will be a major breakthrough," he added.

Prof. Thorne said the most important aspect of the breakthrough was the fact that an animal model had been discovered on which doctors could work to help patients who were AIDS-positive.
Aids TV battle

From AIDAN HENNIGAN in London

A STARK warning that 4,000 people in Britain will have died of AIDS by 1990 was issued yesterday by the British Social Services Secretary, Norman Fowler, as the Government's Aids publicity campaign got under way.

The first television advertisements, on the BBC and the commercial channels, were shown last night. Next week, a special leaflet will be delivered to every household in Britain setting out the dangers and listing the precautions that should be taken.

Essentially the government's message is: "If you ignore Aids it could be the death of you. Don't die of ignorance."

Mr. Fowler told a London press conference that 283 people have so far died of the disease out of 610 known cases who had contracted it by the end of last month. The majority of the victims were homosexuals, mainly living in London.

Mr. Fowler said the World Health Organisation estimated there will be between 500,000 to three million deaths from Aids within the next five years.

The Chief Medical Officer, Sir Donald Acheeze, speaking at the launch of the campaign, said: "It is impossible for us to predict at this stage what the long-term result of 10 or 20 years of the virus will be in the human body, although we know that 10% to 30% of those infected at the beginning of the outbreak have subsequently developed the fatal condition. "We should be prepared for the possibility that the final figure may be more than 50%.

The latest figures released by the DHSS yesterday show that up to the end of last month there had been 610 Aids cases in Britain with 283 deaths.

The new TV advertising campaign to stop the spread of the disease will run for three weeks. It warns that Aids now presents a threat to everyone and urges people to read the government leaflets which will drop through letter boxes over the next two to three weeks.

The TV ad will be backed up by advertising in 1,200 cinemas for one month, from January 16. Letters sent through the post will be stamped "Aids — Don't die of ignorance."

Sir Donald said progress was being made in developing a vaccine against Aids, but the assumption was that it would not be possible to immunise people against the virus for at least five years.

"At the moment within the UK the virus is still confined to the recognised risk groups but it is spreading. Unless people change their behaviour it will become much more widespread," he warned.

Mr. Fowler said: "There is good evidence that knowledge about Aids and the Aids virus can lead to quite dramatic changes in sexual behaviour."

Meanwhile, it was announced that the authorities were considering screening members of the armed forces following a scare about the visit of a regiment to an area near Mombassa which is said to be riven with the disease.
AIDS tests urged as regiment returns

Army on the alert

THE Army refused to comment last night on whether the 1st Battalion The Queen's Own Highlanders — whose members have been urged to take tests for AIDS — is next due in Northern Ireland.

AIDS tests as regiment returns

Defence Ministry advice to the battalion came after it returned from Kenya, where the disease is rife.

An Army spokesman said: "We do not reach an advance on developments in the area.

"It is purely coincidental." However, sources say the battalion is not due to return in the near future.

All personnel are being given the opportunity to be screened for AIDS when they return from detention overseas. Those found to have been particularly at risk are to be given blood tests.

A concern shared by the vices of the Artillery, Army Medical, Air Force, and personnel officers is the Defence Ministry, which replaced them last week.

AIDS is the acquired immune deficiency syndrome caused by the virus that attacks the immune system of the body, causing the body to become vulnerable to other diseases.

It was confirmed last night that several members of the 1st Battalion have been involved in the screening process.

At least one accused is through infected blood during a medical examination.

Some officers believe the threat is offset by knowledge and drug testing, two of the measures to control the AIDS virus, which has become endemic within the forces.

It is acknowledged, however, that in some parts of the service, homosexuality exists.

4,000 doomed in next three years

"If many in 4,000 soldiers are likely to die from AIDS in the next three years, the Government was told yesterday — the day when the first TV AIDS commercial was screened.

More than half the 30,000 people now carrying the virus could die of AIDS in the next five years, and social workers estimated the number of children in the arms of the nation's social services at more than 10,000.

However, a Queen's University professor yesterday called the Government's response "a bit feeble".

Professor David Simpson, of the microbiology department, said the disease was not due to arrive in West Belfast for another week.

He said: "People might be offended at these figures, but there are no figures available for Northern Ireland.

"The facts are: 30,000 people are carrying the virus, almost 6,000 have been given infected blood."

Of the four people in the country who have had AIDS — two of them have died — there were homosexuals. There are around 50 people who have the virus, almost half of them have been given infected blood.

Options being considered include whether a person with HIV should be infected — because they would be asked to give up on exercise in the future, where soldiers visited the coastal area near Newhaven and Malahide — will be turned into hospitals for prisoners.

The Ministry refused to confirm that the battalion's medical officers were present for the ceremony that at least 40 new cases were identified during the visit.

During the Queen's Own Highlanders' visit to Kenya it was decided that similar areas should be put out of bounds to the 1st Battalion, the Pembrokeshire Regiment, which replaced them last week.

The 7th Armoured Division's 1,400 soldiers were caught up in the AIDS scare.

It was confirmed last night that several members of the 1st Battalion have been involved in the screening process.

At least one accused is through infected blood during a medical examination.

Some officers believe the threat is offset by knowledge and drug testing, two of the measures to control the AIDS virus, which has become endemic within the forces.

It is acknowledged, however, that in some parts of the service, homosexuality exists.
ACTING ON AIDS

Yesterday's statistics on the number of Aids victims up to the end of December, which were released to coincide with the Government's public health campaign of television advertising and leaflets, confirm rather than add to the known facts about the spread of the disease. By far the largest category of the 610 Aids victims in Britain, for instance, consists of homosexual and bisexual men - 538 in all. Other high-risk groups account for most of the rest. Only four heterosexuals, three women and one man, are presumed to have been infected in this country. The theme of much public health advertising - that Aids is not a "gay disease" - may be medically true but, for the moment at least, it is statistically false.

These are, of course, just the numbers of those who have either died or demonstrate the symptoms of "full-blown" Aids. Many more - a guesstimated 40,000 people - are Aids carriers. Mr Norman Fowler, the Secretary of State for Social Services, yesterday offered the further guesstimate that 4,000 of these potential victims will die between now and 1990 in Britain and nothing can be done to save them.

With the median time from infection to diagnosis currently put at five years, however, what happens today will determine the likely course of the disease from 1992 onwards. It will, of course, continue to spread. Some current Aids carriers will not develop the full symptoms until 1993 or beyond and, because sexual habits do not change overnight, some people will be infected in the meantime.

There are good prospects, however, that the spread will be less rapid than the doubling every 10 months of recent years. Two years ago, public knowledge was so low that few people took even elementary precautions against Aids. The present level of awareness, though still inadequate, offers a considerably greater barrier to it. In addition, as Aids spreads from such high-risk groups as promiscuous homosexuals to the general population, it is likely to be transmitted from person to person less rapidly.

This modest optimism could be confounded if more virulent strains of the virus emerged which could be passed on by casual social contacts. Given the ability of the Aids virus to mutate, that horrifying prospect cannot be altogether excluded - though there is no sign of it as yet. By the same token, the disease might be contained more effectively if the public were to become either more moral or more prudent in sexual matters.

Both sorts of changes are perfectly possible. Indeed, to a modest extent, they are already visible. As Mr Fowler pointed out yesterday, the MORI poll published in The Times showed that, as a result of Aids and the public information campaign about it, 42 per cent of married people said that they would be less likely to have extramarital sex, and 26 per cent of young single people are more likely to use a condom. Moreover, the recent fall in venereal diseases among homosexuals in this country suggests that some quite dramatic changes in sexual behaviour may already have begun.

It is plain from the same poll, however, that some myths persist which need dispelling. And if people are not reminded of the various risks of Aids, their level of knowledge could well decline again. So the campaign of public education launched yesterday remains necessary. Is it, however, well-conceived, or is there justice in the criticism of it as feeble and overly restrained?

If the television advertising were the entire campaign, that criticism might hold. But it is designed merely to draw attention to the much more informative leaflet. This it does clearly, simply, dramatically and with candour. The fact that it does not employ "street" terms to make its point is no drawback. Such language is not necessary to convey the information; it would offend and thus deter the interest of many people; and it may even contribute to that coarsening of the sensibilities on sexual matters which is one factor encouraging the sexual promiscuity behind Aids.
Testing our defences

The call for Aids tests among the Queen’s Own Highlanders has a worrying precedent.

When the medical officer of the Queen’s Own Highlanders this week urged the testing of his soldiers for the AIDS virus - the First Battalion have just returned from Kenya where the disease is rife - he may well have been prompted by another battle in another century. By 1859 it was estimated that one in four British soldiers had syphilis and in 1864 the government of the day brought in the first of three draconian Contagious Diseases Acts. It was passed without publicity or opposition, although the Act violated the civil rights achieved since Magna Carta.

But as the rights concerned were mainly those of working class women, there was at first little fuss at their inhumanity. The enemy, as far as the government was concerned, were prostitutes, not the men who used them. The Contagious Diseases Acts legalized the registration of prostitutes, their enforced medical examination and, for those found to be infected, compulsory detention.

The effect was that any woman walking along the street in a military district could be dragged off on the suspicion of a single policeman and made to undergo a brutal examination. The centres for these became places of public entertainment and jostling crowds would gather outside to watch who was escorted in. One woman, not a prostitute, committed suicide as a result of her degradation and many others carried the scars from their treatment ever afterwards.

At one point the government considered extending such enforced examination to soldiers’ wives; though not the soldiers themselves. Women had become the scapegoats for a troubled society.

If the predictions of today’s medical establishment - that every family, by the end of the century, will know someone with the disease - are right, then the “Victorian values” so beloved by Mrs Thatcher may take on a new meaning.

The signs are already there. In Britain the Conservative Family Campaign, a right-wing pressure group, has called on the Government to isolate Aids victims. It has also been suggested - shades of 1859 - that the state should re-introduce the regulation of prostitution.

It may be that it will be considered a matter of survival to curtail civil liberties if Aids develops into the plague it threatens to become, but if that is the case, we might do well to consider how easy it once was for a panicking government to take them away, and how difficult to get them restored.

It took the Victorian reformer Josephine Butler 20 years to get the Contagious Diseases Acts off the Statute books. Raised though she was in upper-class gentility, Josephine Butler became incensed at the hypocrisy in the moral standards which castigated women as the sole perpetrators of vice and simultaneously condoned male promiscuity, and she revolted against the notion that to abolish the Acts would be “to sacrifice the health and vigour of unborn creatures to the rights of harlotry.”

She viewed the Acts as the first step towards totalitarianism, and declared: “An injustice to the meanest citizen is an injustice to us all.”

Samatha Norman
Grim forecast of three million deaths worldwide by 1990

4,000 doomed to die of Aids, Fowler warns

By Thomas Prentice, Science Correspondent

About 4,000 people in Britain, and up to three million worldwide, will die of Aids in the next three years, Mr Norman Fowler, Secretary of State for Social Services, said yesterday.

Making it plain that he foresaw the time when hospitals would not be able to cope with the problem, he emphasized the potential role of the churches in providing hospices for the dying, and said he planned to call a conference of experts to discuss the need for hospitals for the victims.

The latest figures, issued by the Department of Health and Social Security yesterday, show that there had been 610 cases of Aids (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) in Britain by the end of December, including 293 patients who have died. Between 30,000 and 100,000 more are thought to be carriers of the disease.

Mr Fowler said the grim statistics and forecasts to emphasize the urgency of public response to the Government’s campaign to restrict the spread of the epidemic.

He gave details of the latest phase of the campaign, including the important last act of the first television advertisement on Aids.

The advertisement is being used to draw attention to the Aids threat which is being met in all Britain’s 33 million.

Conservative Aids screening for all serving military personnel is being considered by the Ministry of Defence although this might mean a change in Queen’s Regulations. Officials are also concerned that what happens to servicemen found to be positive. In the last century, the problem of syphilis in the armed forces had to be dealt with in a draconian Act violating civil rights.

Five screening 3
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Householders in the next few weeks. Distribution begins next Monday.

The advertisement shows the word “Aids” being chanted from a piece of rock which becomes a gravestone. A commentary says that the Aids virus is deadly, can be passed during sexual intercourse, can be caught by anyone, and is spreading.

“If you ignore Aids, it could be your death,” the voice says. “Don’t die of ignorance; it could be your death.”

A similar advertisement, featuring an Aids attack, is to be shown in 1,500 cinemas throughout the country from January 15.

“The most important thing we have to do is convince people of the urgency of the situation without causing personal anxiety and panic”, Mr Fowler said at a news conference.

He said he fully accepted that there was a moral issue behind Aids and that he intended to continue talks with church leaders. “I hope we can work together to develop a comprehensive and caring response to the needs of all those affected by the virus and the disease.”

Mr Fowler drew attention to the likely need for hospitals to be provided for patients dying of Aids, and the role he thought the churches could play in providing such care.

“The hospice idea is one where some churches will want to make a contribution”, he said. “The church has a very big input to make here.”

He said he was calling a conference of experts to discuss the care of Aids sufferers outside of hospitals after his return from a fact-finding visit to the United States later this month.

Sir Donald Acheson, the Government’s chief medical officer, said: “We have to be prepared for the possibility that more than 50 per cent of those infected will develop Aids. It is also possible that further complications of the virus may emerge in the years to come.”

But he said it was impossible to predict when the long-term effects of the virus on the human body would be over the next 10 to 20 years.

Vaccin development was likely to be at least five years away, and probably more, Sir D said.
HOW THE GOVERNMENT AIMS TO
Message

Fowler spells out Britain's bleak future

Experts welcome 'tough' crusade

Viewers are left baffled by 'arty' TV advert

HALT THE PLAGUE THREATENING EVERY FAMILY
of doom as the Aids war begins

Danger signals that no-one heeded

Softly, softly is not the way

All soldiers to face tests

Dlisted

Delighted

PUZZLE the TV advert that baffled viewers
Pioneer hospice’s cash crisis

By Chris Mill
Medical Correspondent

It brought an immediate plan for help from the London Hospice in Needing Hill.

Director and founder Christopher Staveley warned that people would be left to die at home unless the project raised £2 million. It has raised £620,000 so far.

Mr. Staveley said: “With the numbers doubling every 10 months, we need to respond quickly if we are going to provide the level of compassionate terminal nursing every person deserves.”

“Even at this early stage of the epidemic, London Hospice in Needing Hill is already a life line for patients and families.”

The cash shortage may delay the 25-bed hospice’s opening planned for the end of this year. The money is needed to pay for the building, staff and equipment.
Expert tells government in a secret memo: The danger is far worse than we thought AIDS

- An enormous epidemic in long-term future
- 25,000 cases in the next five years
- It is likely that every carrier will die of AIDS
- Education may be only 50% effective

A SECRET memo by a government expert warns that 25,000 people will have AIDS within five years, TODAY can reveal.

But this failed to emerge last night when Health Secretary Norman Fowler, launching a TV advertising campaign about the disease, said it will have killed only 4,000 by 1990.

Senior public health statistician Dr. Hilary Tillett, in a paper in TODAY's possession, warns: "I have been made aware that the epidemic we are facing is far worse than I had realised.

"We should consider the implications of an enormous epidemic in the long-term future." And she adds: "This is a very stark picture of escalating danger, I prefer to be cautious and avoid scaremongers.

"Moreover, in this situation I think it vital that everyone involved should be aware of the need not acting overly or the possible catastrophic epidemic."

by CHRISTOPHER MONCKTON

At the same time as this memo is published soon in the scientific journal Nature says it is now thought that just every AIDS carrier will die.

Previously, experts had estimated that only one in three carriers would usually be killed by the disease.

Dr. Tillett, of the Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre at Colindale in north London, is one of the leading researchers at the moment of AIDS in this country.

Distortion

Her secret memo says that the deadly virus may be spreading faster and faster, because:

- New cases are being reported so fast.
- The length of time from infection to death varies widely, distorting figures.
- This disease is now seen as an "emergency" of the Hiroshima variety in death is not known. A long period means more infected cases will be revealed.

The official statistics of AIDS is so narrow it excludes many types of men or female illnesses that are caused by the AIDS virus.

- Some unreported cases may be caused by normal sex or by sex not reported.

He adds: "If these cases are not reported they will be expanded among the unreported cases and may be more or less 50% of the total."


devoting

We would not deny that thousands of lives could be saved by the right governance measures, and that is why we are doing the advertising campaign and donating $100 million to the UNAIDS initiative.

"People must take up the message of those campaigns."

He said the official view of how fast the AIDS epidemic has spread had been revised to a level by Dr. Tillett's letter.

The letter runs: "If you look at the letter in the Financial Times, you will see that this epidemic is not as serious as we thought."

He said: "If the epidemic is not as serious as we thought, it is a great relief."
Aidswatch backs Fowler's fears

My own Aidswatch computer model, based on what little is known about the disease worldwide, predicts success for the mya. Every year or so we are very close to these of both Nor- man Fowler and Dr "SHO.

Assuming we behaved and persist to 90% in the early 30's, the model suggests these for new AIDS carriers.
Acupuncture: no AIDS fear

Fears that acupuncture needles can transmit AIDS are unfounded, the President of the Irish Acupuncture Association said last night.

Mr. Ronnie Turner said that some patients had raised queries about AIDS and acupuncture.
Welcome set to receive US go-ahead for anti-Aids drug

By Michael Clark and Carol Leonard

Welcome, the pharmaceutical group which made a Valentine's Day debut on the stock market last year, is expected to have an Aids drug, AZT, approved by the advisory committee to the US Food and Drugs Administration next Friday.

The advisory committee at present, a panel of medical experts, will hear evidence about the potentially life-saving drug in a five-day hearing in Washington, and is expected to make its recommendation to the full FDA within five days thereof.

Should the first time this has been considered under the new "FAST" (Faster Access to Simultaneous Treatment) category, specially created by the US health authorities, to speed up the approval process for Aids drugs. Experts in London say it is impossible to predict how long it will take before the FDA pronounces its final decision, which is expected to be a matter of days rather than weeks.

Approval by the FDA will release the drug for sale in the US and although it is not expected to be a highly commercial venture, the drug's psychological and emotional importance is almost incalculable.

In March, the company's shares were traded on the market at a price of $1.40, and the US drug company said it had only received $15 million from the drug, worth $21 million in the UK. The drug's potential had already been acknowledged by the company, which had invested $30 million in the development of the drug.

The drug is expected to be the first of its kind to be approved by the FDA, and its approval could create a significant market for the drug, which is currently under development by several companies.

The drug is expected to be an effective treatment for Aids, and the US National Institutes of Health has already approved the drug for use in clinical trials.

The drug is expected to be available on the market in the next few weeks, and the company is expected to receive approval from the FDA within the next few days.

The drug is expected to be priced at around $100 per tablet, and the company is expected to make a profit of around $5 million per year from the drug.

The company is expected to have the drug available for sale in the US within the next few months, and the company is expected to make a significant profit from the drug.