Print Media

National HIV and AIDS Archives

#NationalHIVArchives

6th to 10th February 1987
SHOWMAN Liberace, who died on Wednesday at the age of 67, planned two memorial services where his family and friends, including his fellow stars, could say goodbye.

The first will be held this week in the millionaire's desert resort of Palm Springs, where friends like Frank Sinatra and Bob Hope have homes.

The second will be held next week in Las Vegas, where Liberace scored his greatest triumphs. Fellow performers in Las Vegas include Tom Jones, who sent the dying entertainer flowers; Sammy Davis Jr. and, Diana Ross.

The piano player, whose taste for fabulous furs and glamorous costumes made him a show business legend, had asked to be buried close to his beloved mother Frances and brother George in Forest Lawn Cemetery in Los Angeles.

Stars to honour Liberace

The exhumed body of the man who called himself "Mr. Showmanship", covered by a blue plastic sheet, was taken from his luxurious Spanish-style home to a funeral home.

Liberace's manager for 30 years, Seymour Heller, bitterly denied a Las Vegas newspaper report that Liberace, who never married, had AIDS.

He was pronounced dead by his personal physician at his home, dominated by a 10-foot wrought iron candelabra — Liberace's trademark — on the front lawn.

Family members, including his sister, Angelina Farrell, were at his bedside when Liberace died amid beloved relics of his trade — a piano-shaped bar and bed and, in his breakfast room, an antique car which Liberace once used to drive on stage.

The entertainer slipped into a coma on Tuesday after he had been given the Last Rites by a priest.
AIDS fund doubled

THE British government is to double the amount spent on combating the growing danger of AIDS.

But health authorities immediately responded to yesterday's announcement by saying the money - £7 million in the coming financial year - was still nowhere near enough.

The new figure for cash being sent to health authorities trying to cope with the spreading outbreak of the deadly virus was announced by Social Services Secretary Mr. Norman Fowler.

It compares with the £3 million given to the authorities to fight the disease in the current financial year.

Most of the money - £7.6 million - will go to London, where most AIDS patients are treated.

But a spokesman for North West Thames Regional Health Authority said: "It is not nearly as much money as we were hoping for."

"We are concerned about how we will be able to cope with the shortfall."

Mr. Fowler himself later admitted that health authorities would be spending between £22 million and £33 million in combating AIDS - about four times the amount the government was handing out.

He pledged that public health laboratories and voluntary bodies dealing with AIDS would also soon get more money.

Spanish arrests

SIX Britons arrested by Spanish police in Marbella after the seizure of 590 kilos of hashish - with a street value of £3m - will appear in court there today.

The Foreign Office in London said the five men and a woman had been charged in connection with the drugs haul.

"We understand they will appear in court to face charges related to the seizure," said an FO spokesman.
Christian answer to the AIDS crisis

SIR — The AIDS epidemic has been recently described as a plague sent by God to punish a sinful world, on the lines of that ancient divine visitation on Sodom and Gomorrah. This view can lead to a fatalism, a passive wait until the wrath of God has passed. To my mind the epidemic is better seen as clear evidence that human behaviour has consequences and that disordered behaviour will bring evil consequences sooner or later. This is a law of nature.

God has given us the power to choose but our choices inevitably carry implications for good or evil. But that power of choice also means that we can do something to change the situation.

There is no denying that sexual depravity and promiscuity were the original source of the AIDS epidemic. This has brought serious consequences on those concerned and on others, drug addicts and, in particular, innocent married partners and haemophiliacs.

The situation calls for a radical moral response. This will require a reappraisal of contemporary sexual attitudes and sexual behaviour. We have the answer in a return to a Christian way of life marked by chastity and by fidelity to one's married partner.

The sinful nature of permissiveness may at last become clear when it is also seen to be suicidal. It is irresponsible of people of public opinion to fight shy of providing the only safe advice, advice in keeping with our traditional way of life, advice supported by the powerful motivation of our Christian faith. Surely, they are not so committed to a secularist ideology that they are prepared to sacrifice human lives for it?

The condom policy line of 'Take Care — Play Safe' will not practically meet the case, even if it were ethical in terms of the extra-marital sex which it tacitly accepts and of the perversion of the sex act which it implies.

In the Lifeline radio programme on January 23, Dr. James Walsh, deputy chief medical officer of the Department of Health, made an honest statement that the faith of some countries in the condom as a means of controlling AIDS was rather touching but that he himself would be very slow to give advice along the lines that the use of a condom provided protection against AIDS.

AIDS bids fair to be the medico-moral crisis of our generation. It will be a challenge for Christians to present the gospel messages of personal growth and health through self-discipline and of loving care for those who suffer the results of wrong living on the part of themselves or of others.

The self-righteous recriminations of "I told you so" and "you made your bed, now lie in it" will never be the way of those who follow Christ the Saviour.

Fr. Denis O'Callaghan P.P.
Mallow, Co. Cork.
AIDS campaign delay is wrong

THE anti-AIDS publicity drive which was to have started towards the end of last month has been deferred for another couple of weeks, and we have been assured that there is nothing to do with the fact polling for the general election will take place on Tuesday week. Fine Gael has described as “rubbish” any suggestion that the campaign has been delayed for fear that the Catholic Church might be upset and show its displeasure before voting takes place.

Why the Catholic Church has been dragged into the matter shouldn't be a mystery, but isn't once one remembers that a confrontational situation between politicians and the Catholic Church, real or fictional, is something media interests are normally determined to create.

The Health Education Bureau has stated the campaign has been delayed because proposals put forward by the chosen advertising agency were published "at this delicate stage" in the Irish Independent, and further amendments were, as a result, necessary. One can make what one likes of that, personally I can make nothing out of it other than, perhaps, that the HEB has become afraid that it might be seen to be too modestly with-it, glib and unbalanced in its approach, because of revelations in this paper.

The deferred of the urgently necessary campaign is, in any event, another indication of bungling ineptitude on the part of the government and its agents.

APROPOS, an anti-AIDS campaign, the views of Dr. Donal Caird, Protestant Archbishop of Dublin, are relevant. He wrote recently: "We must encourage the health authorities to pursue every means of limiting the spread of this disease, but particularly in cases where those who are exposed to a misuse of sex or drugs to consider carefully the terrible cost to themselves and to society, and to abandon these practices."

At present, self-control, fidelity within marriage, and chastity outside marriage would seem to be the only sure way of limiting the spread of the disease, and avoiding what could be a catastrophe.

Similarly, Dr. James McHale, Bishop of Derry, has written that "In addition to moral teaching has stated quite explicitly that the way to health and happiness is by practising chastity outside marriage and fidelity within marriage."

And the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, Dr. John Thomson, has said that his church cannot condone homosexuality, and must pronounce AIDS as a form of sin if it results from any activity which transgresses the moral code. He went on to refer to the Church's teaching "that there should be chastity before marriage and fidelity within it."

These eminent C. of I. and Presbyterian churchmen place much stress on marriage in the context of fighting AIDS. Will the Health Education Bureau—a body of diminishing credibility—balance its anti-AIDS publicity by at least acknowledging that there might be a grain of truth in what Drs. Caird, McHale and Thomson have said?

AFTER two years of stalemate, the E37m. Beaumont Hospital is to open within the next two weeks... A number of exercises are to get elaborate sports complexes, and others are to get new factories... The Government has agreed to the establishment of a duty-free shop at Connacht Regional Airport... Why don't we have a general election every six months?
AIDS

Sir—R. M. Conroy's solution to the AIDS problem (letters February 2nd) is absolutely brilliant, but why only a referendum on AIDS?

Let's have a number of referenda to solve the problems of unmarried mothers, homosexuals, unemployment, living in sin, working mothers, Communists, Protestants, the North and a final one to decide if the Pope should be the future head of state.

Yours, etc.,

JIM McDONALD

147 Greenhills Court,
South Douglas Road,
Cork.
AIDS: the deadly indecision

The government and the medical profession are in danger of being too coy in their approach to AIDS. Spending £20 million on propaganda will be useful. But it is no substitute for real action.

Every proposal that comes up seems to tread on somebody's sensitive corns. The British Medical Association has suggested an extremely modest scheme for finding out how widespread the disease is. Yet the government is shilly-shallying even over that.

All the BMA wants is that a sample of people who have blood tests in hospital for reasons that have nothing to do with AIDS should have their blood tested a second time for the AIDS virus.

That would provide only a minimum of information about the spread of the disease by age, sex and geographical location. But it would tell us nothing more — for instance, about the sexual habits of those infected. And people with AIDS would not even be able to find out from the tests that they had it because it would all be done anonymously.

Most people will find it ridiculous that proof that a person has AIDS should be kept secret. But anonymity has been included in the scheme to soothe some doctors' niggling ethical doubts. Even so, there are still doctors who are not satisfied and as a result the government seems unable to make up its mind.

By pussyfooting around like this all the government is doing is to put off the evil day when reality must be faced. For if AIDS really has taken a hold on the population, as many experts believe, then the tragic consequences will surely show up in dead and dying people in the years ahead.

By failing to trace carriers as energetically as possible now the government is making it certain there will be even more victims than there need be.

Underlying the hesitation seems to be the fear that if large numbers of people are suddenly discovered to have AIDS the health services will simply be unable to cope. So rather than expose this inadequacy, the government and the medical authorities prefer to lie low, hoping their highly visible propaganda campaign will convince people they are doing all they can.

That attitude is not good enough. The government must gear itself up for a mass campaign that combines propaganda and action, like those earlier campaigns that so successfully wiped out polio and TB.

The £7 million Norman Fowler announced yesterday for extra medical care is totally inadequate. The fight against AIDS is, in medical terms, close to total war. Such a war cannot be conducted like a gentlemanly duel between funding partners. It needs massive resources and action far more robust than any yet taken.
False Negative
Medical Labs, Trusted
As Largely Error-Free,
Are Far From Infallible

Haste, Misuse of Equipment,
Specimen Mix-Ups Afflict
Even Best Labs in U.S.

Regulation: Weak and Spotty

By WALT BOGDANICH
Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
NEW YORK - It was 4:30 a.m. When cancer finally choked the last breath of life from Janice Johnson. She was 34 and a mother of two, and she died never knowing why her disease had been so unforgiving. An autopsy report called her abrupt decline “quite unusual.”

Later, an important clue would be discovered: A hospital laboratory in Arlington, Va., had erroneously reported two successive Pap tests as noncancerous. Undetected, the cancer spread rapidly through Mrs. Johnson’s body.

“The lab was never shut down or criticized,” James Daniel Schultz, a John-

son family lawyer who in 1984 settled a wrongful-death claim against the hospital and several doctors for $600,000. He asks: “How many other Janice Johnsons are there?”

No one knows. In many U.S. states, including Virginia, the clinical laboratories that test body fluids and tissues aren’t licensed — and thus enjoy a freedom from regulatory scrutiny not accorded even to hairdressers. Some 20 years after Congress declared war on incompetent clinical labs, many U.S. researchers say that inaccurate and unreliable testing remains a serious health hazard, as well as a waste of millions of dollars. Researchers in various European countries have also expressed concern over laboratory testing errors.

Hard Data

In recent years, dazzling advances in computerized diagnostic testing have lent a comforting air of precision to the healing arts. Whether concerned about blood cholesterol, cancer, genetic flaws or diabetes, Americans spend an estimated $20 billion a year on clinical laboratory tests, often receiving impressively detailed printouts on the state of their health.

“Far the most part, such testing is a great boon to diagnosis and treatment. But along the way, patients have come to regard lab work as infallible — a dangerous assumption, critics say. “Every lab is producing some errors,” warns Paul Fischer, an Augusta, Ga., physician and authority in the field. “Human error is inherent in this process. . . . I don’t think the public realizes that.”

In the U.S., the problem affects not only fringe laboratories but also prestigious hospitals, publicly traded laboratory companies and labs in doctors’ offices, according to an analysis of thousands of pages of government reports, court records and previously unreleased test data. The recent surge of testing in doctors’ offices is particularly troubling, critics say, because these small facilities are often entirely free of regulatory oversight.

False Starts

While sloppy lab work isn’t as obviously dangerous as incompetent surgery — errors are often caught by a patient’s physician — it can do great harm. An Ohio baby developed mental retardation after a lab failed to detect a genetic condition that required a special diet. An Arizona man died after a biopsy slide of his malignant thyroid tumor was misread by two different labs. A California couple’s marriage broke up after one spouse was mistakenly diagnosed as having syphilis.

Nor is health the only issue: A urinalysis that falsely tags someone as a drug abuser can sabotage the person’s career.

Studies repeatedly have turned up substantial rates of laboratory error, as well as overworked or ill-trained technicians. But abuses are hard to prove, and accountability is scant. By the time an illness has progressed far enough to suggest earlier test error, the slide or specimen often has been discarded.

Little Regulation

Government in the U.S. hasn’t come to grips with the problem. Regulation is so weak and uneven that labs barred from one state can simply do business in another. In some cases, a federal agency has no choice but to reimburse certain labs for tests that it has found them incompetent to perform.

Concern over such problems prompted Congress to pass the Clinical Laboratories Improvement Act in 1967. Although the law covers only a fraction of the nation’s labs — those conducting interstate business — legislators hoped it would be a model for state regulation.

However, only about half of the states have enacted laboratory regulation, and most of it is feeble. In 1978 the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee concluded that the public “cannot have confidence in clinical laboratory testing, despite its critical relationship to good health.”

Faulty tests can occur for many reasons: A machine loses its calibration; testing chemicals lose potency or get used improperly; human specimens are inadvertently switched. Even if a test is performed properly, it may be misinterpreted.

Over the years, the medical profession has developed standards to minimize such mishaps. Conscientious laboratories test chemicals and machine calibrations daily. They frequently test “master” specimens of

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AIDS probe halts burial of Liberace

Officials dramatically halted the funeral of Liberace yesterday in a row over AIDS.
A death certificate for the 67-year-old showman was withdrawn to allow an autopsy.
The move shocked Liberace's family and fans gathered outside his home in Palm Springs, California.

They said it was the kind of controversy that had given Liberace nightmares in his agonised last hours.
He told them he never wanted the world to know his dread secret because of the pain and shame he witnessed after the death from AIDS of Rock Hudson.

But yesterday Riverside County officials rejected the death certificate signed by Dr. Ronald Daniels.
Dr. Daniels insisted Liberace had not died from AIDS.
He certified the star's death on Wednesday as being caused by cardiac arrest brought on by an inflammation of the brain.

Officials said state law required coroners to investigate deaths suspected of being caused by contagious disease.
Liberace is to be entombed at Forest Lawn Memorial Park near Hollywood, alongside his mother and brother.

Last night writer Boze Hadleigh claimed that Rock Hudson had a brief affair with Liberace in 1977.
Irish Times  
7th February 1987

AIDS fear is no defence

A long distance lorry driver who told Dublin District Court that he refused to give a blood sample in a garda station because he was afraid of contracting AIDS was convicted and disqualified from driving for 12 months yesterday.

George Wade (36), Peamount Road, Newcastle, Co. Dublin, was also fined £100 by Justice Daniel Shields on the charge of refusing to give a blood sample in Harcourt Terrace garda station on February 5 last. In a previous court appearance a drunk driving charge against the accused was dismissed.

Mr. Michael Murphy, B.L. defending, told the court that the accused had a morbid fear of AIDS which constituted special and substantial reasons for his refusal under the Act.
Irish Times
7th February 1987

Perhaps the Irish people are not yet ready for the great condoms v AIDS debate which is raging between the moralists and the medicine men.

Earlier this week, Alan Shatter, author of "Family Planning Irish Style," who is known for his liberal views, was canvassing in the Clonskeagh area. He introduced himself to a potential voter and was greeted by: "Shatter! Shatter! Shatter! You are the fella that's going around pushing condoms down everyone's throats."
TODAY, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1987

Aids test order on Liberace

HEALTH chiefs are refusing to allow Liberace's burial until his body has been tested for Aids.

Under Californian law, deaths involving a contagious disease must be investigated by the coroner's office. And officials have refused to accept a doctor's certificate that says the star died of heart failure.

The flamboyant performer, who died aged 67 on Wednesday, always refused to confirm or deny he was homosexual.

Friends and colleagues have denied claims that he had Aids.

But Riverside County coroner Raymond Carillo said yesterday: "This is a case that should have been reported to my department."

Health officials will now examine blood samples or skin tissue to check for the Aids virus.

Carrier

"But even if tests prove positive it doesn't mean he had the Aids disease," said Carillo. "He could have been a carrier."

Liberace will eventually

CHECKS: Liberace be buried alongside his mother and brother in Hollywood's exclusive Forest Lawn Memorial Park.

A memorial service was held for the pianist yesterday in Florida.

Although the star's family had planned a private service, plans from fans persuaded them to let the public attend.

Another service is due to be held in Las Vegas next week.
Clergy die of AIDS in America

By BRENDAN MALIN

THE incurable plague called AIDS has invaded the Catholic clergy of the United States, according to experts studying the incidence of the malady.

Four Catholic clergymen have died of the disease in the Boston area over the last five years and at least two others now have the disease, reports Mr. Lawrence Kessler, director of the AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts. "It would not surprise me if there were more cases," he adds. "Some priests may be afraid to tell the Chancery, I think AIDS challenges the myth of celibacy like nothing in this century."

Mr. Kessler's assessment was made as part of a national-wide survey of "AIDS among the Clergy" published by the "New York Times" which asserts that church officials are now beginning to acknowledge the grim verdict. The newspaper says that some people within the church report that AIDS has caused the death of at least a dozen priests "and suggest the number may be substantially higher."

The survey reports: "In Chicago three brothers and a parish priest died in 1986 as a result of AIDS, according to William F. McCullough, director of the City's AIDS Assistance Foundation. In Houston, a physician said he was currently treating almost a dozen priests who have the disease. In New York, counsellors who work with AIDS patients say that at least three priests have died as a result of the virus in recent years."

Pointing out that AIDS has affected Jewish rabbis, Episcopal priests, Baptist ministers and other clergymen, the "New York Times" observed: "But the increasing awareness that its victims include Catholic clergymen has posed a problem for the church because of the implication that some priests and brothers have also been engaged in homosexual acts in violation of church laws." Medical experts in the U.S. have declared that the disease is most commonly transmitted in sexual relations between homosexual men.

Also reported in the survey in the view of a doctor in Houston, Texas, who said that he had treated three Catholic priests who died of AIDS and that they were "ostracised when their superiors learned of the illness. The doctor said that four other patients, still living, had decided to leave the church and return to their families "to prevent a scandal in their parishes."

The newspaper quotes Rev. Michael Lopes, a Dominican priest who counsels AIDS patients for the Catholic Social Service in San Francisco, as stating that some priests had simply disappeared after discovering that they had AIDS, "dropping out of their religious community in an effort to keep their illness secret." Others, he said, admitted they had AIDS and denounced the church for its attitude towards homosexuality.
IRISH NURSE IN U.K. AIDS FRONTLINE

By John McEntee in London

If the campaign against AIDS is a battle then Irish nurse Mary B. Anthony is a front line medic with the touch of an angel. For the past four years the attractive auburn-haired sister from Dingle, Co. Kerry, has looked after at least one quarter of Britain's AIDS victims.

And last night as doctors at her hospital, St. Mary's Paddington, warned that they were breaking point Sister Mary B. spoke of her attempts to make life as comfortable as possible for her tragic patients.

In an interview with the Sunday Press she said that people dying from the killer sexual disease often needed someone who was a good listener. "Sometimes all they want to do is talk, not only about their illness but about themselves," said the nurse, who originally trained as a nursing sister and now has charge of the busy AIDS ward in these islands.

In charge of 14 nurses in the Airmoth Wright Ward, Sister Mary has watched the number of AIDS sufferers escalate to the busines level where they double every eight months. Last night doctors at the busy hospital appealed to the Minister for Health to increase staff and spend £1m. on 28 extra beds.

Sister Mary B. needs an extra ten nurses but in the meantime she has managed to brighten the last months of many doomed sufferers with her expertise and care. "You get to know all of them so well, not only the patients but their friends and lovers, too," she said. "I suddenly found myself talking to a man of 25 about dying—a young gay lad who had run in the fast lane for so long he just didn't know how to cope or what to say."

In Mary's haven of tranquillity patients have private rooms with a fridge where they are allowed to keep their own food and heat it in Mary B.'s microwave oven. She and her staff have to wear aprons and gloves all the time but on her recommendation the staff no longer wear masks. The ward is often lively and friends are allowed to stay.

"Occasionally when a patient has died I'll get a phone call from a lover simply saying 'I'll miss you,'" she said. "They get used to having us round to talk to and help them along. When the patient dies all of a sudden they're alone."

"Up to now most patients have been gay," she said. "But we are starting to see heterosexual sufferers, which shows how the disease has spread. If we are not careful it will be all we can do to keep it under control."

The first question that newly diagnosed AIDS patients ask the staff at St. Mary's Hospital is: "How long have I got?" Sister Mary B. admitted it was not an easy question to answer. "First of all someone will be an absolute pain of a patient, complaining about absolutely everything and not talking about their diagnosis at all. You just have to wait and talk.

"The majority of patients are not worried about dying as such but how they die. Like everyone they want to die without pain."

The people suffering from terminal AIDS follow an emotional pattern of denial, anger and finally acceptance. But Mary B. has no doubt about her attitude to death.

"It is a blessing. Our attitude is to think positively and be cheerful and if I have learned nothing else here I will have learned about courage."

SISTER MARY B. ANTHONY . . . I suddenly found myself talking to a man of 25 . . . a young gay who had run in the fast lane so long he just didn't know how to cope.
Sunday Tribune
8th February 1987

Liberace carried Aids virus

THE 67-year-old entertainer, Liberace, was exposed to the Aids virus, but did not necessarily have the disease, according to a report in the Los Angeles Times. Sabas Roxas, a coroner's supervisor, told the newspaper that a blood test for Aids, done before Liberace died, came back "positive".

Following the controversy over the entertainer's death, the burial has been postponed because the coroner has refused to accept the death certificate until a post mortem is carried out on the body.
TODAY we publish Ireland's first comprehensive survey on the dreaded killer disease AIDS.

It reveals just what YOU think of the disease — your fears and worries, your beliefs and misconceptions, your ideas for halting the spread of this 20th-Century plague.

The AIDS Report is based on a nationwide survey commissioned by SUNDAY WORLD and carried out on a scientific basis by fully-trained interviewers from Lansdowne Market Research.

Some of their findings may shock you.

• MORE than half of you think condoms should be publicly promoted to reduce the risk of AIDS.
• THREE-QUARTERS of you think children should be educated at school about AIDS.
• OVER two-thirds of you think the media should be explicit and direct about sex in order to warn the public of the dangers of AIDS.
• SIX out of every 10 people interviewed said they knew "not much" or "almost nothing at all" about AIDS.
• ONLY a third of Dubliners said they would know where to go for treatment should they contract the disease.
• NEARLY a quarter of the respondents thought you could catch AIDS by giving blood, and 15 per cent thought you could catch it by sitting on a toilet seat.

Some of their findings may disturb you.

• MORE than eight out of every 10 people questioned believed the Government should be doing more to warn people about the dangers of AIDS.
• ONLY 13 per cent think that Ireland has adequate treatment facilities for victims of the disease.

The report reveals an urgent need for public education on the causes of AIDS, the way in which it spreads, and the means by which it can be prevented.

We believe it calls for decisive action.
THE FIRST IRISH

‘Yes to condoms’

RTE viewers know

THOUSANDS of Irish people have false notions of how they can catch AIDS.

A surprisingly high proportion of respondents to our special survey believed you can catch the disease by giving blood, sharing a cup or glass, sitting on a toilet seat, or using a public bath.

Four per cent of those questioned even believed you could catch AIDS by shaking hands with someone.

But 21 per cent replied correctly that you could contract AIDS through homosexual intercourse, 38 per cent replied correctly that you could catch it through sharing syringes, and 61 per cent answered correctly that you could catch it through 'straight' intercourse.

So, while the survey showed people in Ireland have a clear understanding of the main ways AIDS is transmitted, it also highlighted the need for public education to dispel the myths.

The pollsters say they found evidence that people who have been exposed to the British Governments ‘Don’t Be Silly’ campaign were more concerned than others about the AIDS problem.

Questioned about their knowledge of AIDS, 87 per cent of respondents to RTE only areas said they knew ‘almost nothing’.

HOW CAN YOU BE INFECTED?

HOMOSEXUAL INTERCOURSE (91%)

SHARING SYRINGES (68%)

HETEROSEXUAL INTERCOURSE (81%)

RECEIVING BLOOD (78%)

GIVING BLOOD (23%)

KISSING (18%)

SHARING A GLASS (17%)

TOILET SEATS (15%)

SWIMMING POOLS (12%)

BEING SNEEZED ON (9%)

SHAKING HANDS (4%)

Passport of all adults who believe AIDS can be caught in the following ways.

GOVERNMENT NOT WARNING US ENOUGH

The Government should be doing more to warn people about the dangers of AIDS.

That’s the view of more than eight in ten of the people interviewed in our special poll.

Sixty-four per cent agreed that AIDS had not been publicized enough, while only one in ten disagreed.

A mere 11 per cent of respondents thought the health facilities for AIDS treatment in Ireland were adequate.

Despite the high percentage of people concerned, the facility was described as ‘inadequate’ by one in five.

But by a huge majority, the interviewees thought more TV programmes should be made about the dangers of AIDS (86 per cent), and more programmes on the dangers of drugs should be made (84 per cent).

Slightly fewer people (55 per cent) agreed that there should be more programmes to educate the public on the dangers of AIDS (54 per cent), and more programmes to educate parents about their child’s risk (53 per cent).

Eighty per cent of those questioned were not aware of the disease, but 40 per cent of those with AIDS are among the. This is a public service broadcast by RTÉ.
AIDS SURVEY!

Where to get help

Continued on Page 56

TEACH THE KIDS!

Children should be educated about sexual responsibility, according to the overwhelming majority of the people who took part in this survey.

A full 78 per cent of those surveyed believe that children should be taught the importance of their sexual responsibilities.

Only one in every 10 does not agree.

The pool of respondents in this survey included a wide range of people, including those living with AIDS, their partners, and people who have never been exposed to the disease.

More than half of the people questioned in our survey had no idea where they would go for treatment should they become infected with AIDS.

Only one in 10 knew where to go.

The figure was much higher in other parts of the world.

WHERE TO GET HELP

More than half the people questioned in our survey had no idea where they would go for treatment should they become infected with AIDS.

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IRELAND'S FIRST AIDS SURVEY

Continued from page 55

WE'RE NOT THAT WORRIED ABOUT CATCHING IT

DESPITE forecasts that, within the next decade or so, most of us will know someone affected by AIDS, Irish people don’t appear to be all that worried. Public attitudes are reflected in an Independent Market Research survey respondents: “How worried are you that you — or someone you know — will get AIDS?” The majority — a third of respondents — were either not very worried or not at all worried. Only 14 per cent said they were very worried.

And just one in four were “a little worried.”

The positive way they find this ‘conspiracy’ about AIDS “disappointing.”

They say they are “disappointed” to find that the most vulnerable — the young, and sexually active — regard AIDS as “not a major threat.”

Asked how likely it was that AIDS would eventually become an epidemic for the public at large, 30 per cent said it was very likely and 34 per cent said it was somewhat likely. That’s all.

The respondents were asked how many people with AIDS are likely to be detected in the next generation. All of them (40); most of them (30); some of them (15); none (10).

The vast majority were agreed: “If everyone is being checked for infections, at the moment there is no evidence the disease looks like spreading, which of these statements is true?”

The bottom line: AIDS is not spreading, but does not necessarily treat AIDS.

EXPLICIT ADS ‘YES’

Shepherd interviewed a representative sample of 1,000 adults aged 18 and over, at or near sampling points throughout the Republic of Ireland. All respondents were contacted between January 6-21, 1987.

Clear and unambiguous positioning in newspapers and on television was found similar in 13 per cent of newspapers and 17 per cent of television spots.

DON'T SEGREGATE CARRIERS

VIRTUALLY everyone in Ireland has heard of AIDS — but most people admit they know very little about it.

When asked how much they knew about the disease, two of every three said “not too much” or “nothing at all.”

Only a third of them thought they knew “a good amount” about the disease.

The survey showed that, the higher the level of education, the better informed people are about AIDS.

More than a third of those living in an area of low educational achievement said they knew only a little about AIDS. The average was a bit of knowledge, with two of every three people knowing “nothing at all.”

The major things that affect the way people think about the disease is affected by “Fear.”

The survey also showed that the most vulnerable were equally “ignorant” in knowledge. This was true of the most at risk — the young and the sexually active.

Another eight per cent thought there should be more education, more information, and more public awareness. This was a prime target.

There was some drastic proposals.

Six per cent thought people should be forced to divulge their AIDS status to others.

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NEXT WEEK

PART TWO OF THE SURVEY . . . AND HOW OTHER COUNTRIES DEAL WITH THE PLAGUE
Explicit campaign on AIDS is demanded

By STEVE BRENNAN
Medical Correspondent

AN EXPERT today demanded the launch of an explicit Government information campaign about AIDS.
Survey 2 Brandon

Dr. Derek Freedman, one of Ireland's leading experts on the killer disease, told the public, had now made it clear that a plain talking information campaign was needed.

He said a survey, carried out by Longford Market Research and published by the Sunday World, showed that 71% of people were now aware of AIDS and 81% of those questioned felt the public had to learn more about the disease.

The survey found that more than half of those questioned felt that condoms should be publicly promoted to reduce the risk of AIDS.

Dr. Freedman said the survey showed that 91% of people knew AIDS could be spread by homosexual intercourse, 86% knew it could be caught by sharing syringes and 81% per cent knew it could be caught through heterosexual intercourse.

'But another expert on the disease, Professor Irene Hilley of UCD, said the survey showed a trend of 'sheer ignorance' that should have stopped long ago.'

'The fact that 23 per cent of those surveyed thought they could catch AIDS by GIVING blood was worrying. The survey also showed that 62 per cent of those interviewed felt they knew little or nothing about the disease.'

Of those surveyed, 16 per cent felt that knowing what to do would put them in danger, 17 per cent thought it could be caught by sharing a glass and 15 per cent felt it could be caught from a toilet seat.

Dr. Harry Cleecey at the Health Education Bureau revealed today that the Bureau was currently carrying out its own survey into the level of knowledge in Ireland about AIDS.

But he said he welcomed the new survey and found it extremely valuable.

It is generally accepted now that no AIDS information campaign will work unless it addresses the public directly.
AIDS POSES MORAL CRUX IN CHURCH

A week ago, during the Saturday night Mass sponsored by Dignity, a Catholic homosexual organisation, worshippers at St. Francis Xavier, in New York, prayed aloud for friends and relatives who had died of AIDS.

One of the names they recited was Dechland Daily.

He was a Catholic priest, assigned at the time of his death to the Staten Island parish of St. Patrick.

Two of the other names recited for remembrance were the Rev. Mills O'Nally, a popular Episcopal priest in New York, and the Rev. Michael Koonsman, the founder of the New York chapter of Integrity, a national organisation for gay Episcopalians.

Other priests and pastors are dying of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), and more and more their obituaries list it as the cause of death. And more and more, as clergymen go public with their homosexuality, they raise special moral problems for their churches.

The problem goes to the heart of the age-old argument about homosexuality, sin and what to do when men and women of the cloth openly proclaim their own gyness or admit that they are suffering from AIDS.

Adding to the human, theological and spiritual dimensions of the issue is a perception that religious men and women should lead moral lives and that when they do not, they somehow tarnish religion itself.

Instead, it endorses Courage, founded in 1980 at the suggestion of the late Terence Cardinal Cooke. Its membership, considerably smaller than Dignity's, holds weekly services, and Cardinal O'Connor, a fierce opponent of gay activists, celebrated one Mass.

The Catholic Church operates four of five centres around the country for psychiatric and spiritual counselling of gay priests — "like rehab centres for alcoholic priests," says the Rev. John Harvey, president of Courage.

Officially, Catholic Church teaching condemns homosexual activity but not homosexuality itself. "The impression you get," says Tim Coughlin, the president of the New York chapter of Dignity, "is that the church says one thing and does another."

"It's like we've committed sin of bad public relations," a gay New York priest says.

No one knows how many ordained men and women are homosexual. Kevin Gordon, a one-time Christian Brother now living in New York, estimated a few years ago that two of every five priests were actively or passively homosexual. Other experts dispute this.

Many of the few openly gay priests are involved in ministering to AIDS victims and gay religious groups like Dignity, which has several chapters in the New York metropolitan area, and Integrity. Nearly every major denomination, from Lutheran to the Greek Orthodox has an unofficial and often unrecognized gay auxiliary, but most of them count their membership in the dozens.

There are several New York churches that welcome gays, including a gay synagoge (Congregation Beth Simchat Torah, in Greenwich Village). There also is the Metropolitan Community Church, which endorses a homosexual lifestyle.

The Archdiocese of New York does not recognise Dignity because, it says, members do not promise to lead celibate lives.
New peak in AIDS figures

The number of AIDS victims in Britain has risen dramatically to 686 — and 255 have already died, according to British Department of Health figures.

The latest official monthly statistics to the end of January show by far the biggest increase. There were 70 new cases, including 62 deaths, compared with the figures up to the end of last year.

The government is repeating its warning that the disease will claim 4,000 lives by the end of 1989.

Social Services Secretary Mr. Norman Fowler said: "This is the biggest monthly increase in AIDS cases that we have so far experienced."

"Those who have now developed the disease contracted the infection some years ago. We shall have to brace ourselves for many more cases to be reported in the months and years to come."

The figures again show that AIDS cases are concentrated in London and involve mainly male homosexuals.

Of the 686 cases, 606 are gay men, compared with 20 haemophiliacs and nine drug abusers. Three baby boys and three baby girls also have AIDS.
Liberace's last words: 'Don't feel sorry for me'

Liberace's last words: 'Don't feel sorry for me.'

He told friends: "I have nightmares about the headlines that will appear when I'm gone. I saw them in my dreams. One said, 'Viva Liberace.'"

An envelope of flowers and cards from friends cheered his final days. "With tears running down his cheeks, Liberace told a friend: 'I didn't know so many people loved me.'"

"Don't worry for me, I want to go to my grave smiling. That's how I want you to remember me."

Over the years we've had such fun, we've traveled the world, met Kings, Queens and Presidents and some of the most influential people in our time."

"I beg you remember the laughter and the good times. Please don't feel sorry for me, I'm the luckiest man on earth to have had the life I have lived."

Liberace's body was driven back to Forest Lawn for a private memorial service attended by his sister, Angeline Farrell, nephews and nieces and close friends.

His body was taken by larvae for a simple ceremony on the lawn where he was buried in the family section where it was buried next to the body of his brother George and his mother.

Yesterday his closest friends expressed anger and bitterness over the way Liberace's death was reported.

There were no signs of death were still going on last night.

Coroner Ramon Castilla revealed Liberace was exposed to the AIDS virus, but the tests would not say he had died of the disease.

Tests on tissues will be completed today and the results revealed the outcome. Last night it was revealed that medical charges for the treatment of a terminal illness were not covered by his insurance.

A coroner's spokesman said: "There was an obligation to report that he died from a terminal illness."
AIDS

Sir, — R. M. Conroy is quite wrong to suggest (letters, February 2nd) that AIDS is not a problem of public health, since deaths from the disease prove the contrary. The same writer fails to grasp the fundamental point that a morality has meaning only to the extent that that morality is agreed. A morality cannot (successfully) be imposed.

Mr/Ms Conroy goes on most arrogantly to usurp the term "Irish nation" to describe those of his/her own mind. The final claim that the "problems" of abortion and divorce have been "solved" in the Republic of Ireland by banning both would be laughable if it weren't so sad. —

Yours, etc.,

JOE MAGGS,
107 Agincourt Avenue,
Belfast BT7 1OD.
Liberace had AIDS antibodies — coroner

A CALIFORNIA coroner said AIDS antibodies had been found in blood samples taken a month ago from Liberace (67), whose embalmed body was buried on Saturday in his family tomb in Forest Lawn memorial park, Los Angeles.

The coroner, Mr Ray Curtin, said the presence of the antibodies "does not necessarily mean Liberace died of the disease," he said.

He said the official cause of death of the flamboyant entertainer last week would be announced today after further tests following Friday's post mortem, which did not reveal any signs of the virus.

Presence of the antibodies indicates that Liberace had been exposed to the virus but does not necessarily mean that he had the disease.

Liberace, who died after a career which turned piano playing into a million-dollar extravaganza, was said by his publicity agent to have suffered heart failure and brain damage. — (Reuters).
Drug hope in war on plague

A leading expert on AIDS predicted yesterday that a treatment for the disease would be available "within a couple of years".

Dr Andrew Moss, a visiting Research Fellow at Middlesex Hospital, who has worked on all aspects of AIDS since 1983, said: "I say this because there are clinical trials of at least one drug with some effect.

"These will be the very first trials for treating people, which will come up this year, and I think over the next two or three years we will see treatment that gives people a better prognosis."

Dr Moss advised people to keep calm about the problem.

"There's no need to go through the roof at this point in the United Kingdom," he said.

He paid tribute to Social Services Secretary Norman Fowler, saying the public education campaign which he had launched was the most aggressive of any Western country.

Asked about scares over the way the disease is transmitted — such as the controversy over whether Princess Diana should wear gloves when she opens a new AIDS clinic at Middlesex Hospital in April — Dr Moss replied: "We have no casual transmission cases of AIDS, no handshake transmission of AIDS, no health worker transmission of AIDS."

The top researcher, from the University of California in San Francisco, said: "If there was any risk of shaking hands with AIDS patients we would know about it in San Francisco."

Ten per cent of the adult male population there was infected, he said.
Liberace AIDS shock

A coroner said AIDS antibodies had been found in blood samples from Liberace, whose embalmed body was buried on Saturday in his family tomb.

California coroner Ray Carrillo told reporters the antibodies had been found in blood samples taken a month ago. "But that does not necessarily mean Liberace died of the disease," he said.

The official cause of death of the flamboyant entertainer will be announced today after further tests. The District Attorney will determine if any laws had been broken. Under California law, deaths of people with contagious diseases have to be reported.

"Some people may think we are a bunch of hicks, but this case is far from over," said Mr Carrillo, who was told of the death two days after Liberace died last Wednesday.

Liberace, 67, who died after a career which turned piano playing into a million-dollar extravaganza, was said by his publicity agent to have suffered heart failure and brain damage.

Less than 24 hours before he was to be buried at Forest Lawn memorial park, in the Hollywood Hills of Los Angeles, coroner's assistants collected the body at the park and drove it 100 miles back to Palm Springs for a post mortem.

The coroner's office has subpoenaed Liberace's medical records, including those from the Eisenhower Memorial Hospital in Palm Springs where he had tests on January 25.

His body was driven back to Forest Lawn for a private memorial service attended by his sister, Angela Farrell, nephews and nieces and close friends.

It was buried next to the bodies of his brother George and mother, Frances. A small group of fans stood at a distance, respecting the family's wishes for privacy. Nearby were the tombs of several actors, including Charles Laughton and George Raft.
Prostitutes fear

An MP is backing a campaign by prostitutes in his constituency for all vice girls to undergo compulsory screening for the AIDS virus.

The girls have set up a special protest group to urge that all prostitutes found to have AIDS be prosecuted if they continue working.

"I am in favour of their demands for compulsory testing," said Mr Richard Ottway, Tory MP for Nottingham North, yesterday.

"I support the principle behind what they are trying to do. I think we must do everything we can to stop the spread of AIDS, and unsafe sex most certainly does spread AIDS.

"While I am absolutely behind what these women are endeavouring to achieve, I also realise there will be difficulties in making it compulsory. But, in the meantime, starting on a purely voluntary basis, I would like to see all prostitutes screened for AIDS."

The campaign follows the discovery that four Nottingham prostitutes have contracted the AIDS virus.
'Put AIDS in EastEnders'

An EastEnders character should contract AIDS to counteract the amount of casual sex portrayed in soap operas, says a health charity.

British Government advertisers warning about the risks of casual sex are often followed by episodes of Dallas, Dynasty and EastEnders in which characters completely ignore those risks, said the Health Information Trust.

"It is highly desirable that one of the serialised characters in EastEnders should contract AIDS to make it all more realistic," said a Trust report "AIDS—Beyond the Adverts" published yesterday.

A BBC spokesman said AIDS had already been mentioned on EastEnders and would continue to be—but there were no plans at present to feature an AIDS sufferer, carrier or scare.

A leading expert on AIDS has predicted that a treatment for the disease will be available "within a couple of years".

Doctor Andrew Moss, a visiting research fellow at Middlesex Hospital who has worked on all aspects of AIDS since 1983, added: "I say this because there are clinical trials of at least one drug with some effect. These will be the very first trials for treating people, which will come up this year, and I think over the next two or three years we will see treatment that gives people a better prognosis."
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Two of the other names recited for remembrance were the Rev. Michael O'Boyle, a popular Episcopal priest in New York, and the Rev. Michael Roosman, the founder of the New York chapter of Integrity, a national organization for gay Episcopalians.

Other priests and pastors are dying of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), and more and more their obituary lists it as the cause of death. And more and more, as churchgoers go public with their homosexuality, they raise special moral problems for their churches.

The problem goes to the heart of the age-old argument about homosexuality: sin and what to do with men and women of the cloth openly proclaim their own sexuality or admit that they are suffering from AIDS.

Adding to the human, theological and spiritual dimensions of the issue is a perception that religious men and women should lead model lives and that when they do not, they somehow harm religious faith itself.

"It's like we've committed sin of public relations," a gay New York priest says.

No one knows how many ordained men and women are homosexual. Kevin Godson, a one-time Christian Brother now living in New York, estimated a few years ago that two of every five priests were active or passively homosexual. Other experts dispute this.

Many of the few openly gay priests are involved in ministering to AIDS victims and gay religious groups like Dignity, which has several chapters in the New York metropolitan area, and Integrity. (Nearly every major denomination, from Lutheran to the Greek Orthodox has an unofficial and often unrecognized gay auxiliary, but most of them count their membership in the dozens).

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Officially, Catholic Church teaching condemns homosexual activity but not homosexuality itself. "The impression you get," says Tim Caughran, the president of the New York chapter of Dignity, "is that the church says one thing and does another."
AIDS ‘not as deadly as cigarettes’

The total number of people who had died from AIDS in Ireland in 5 years was less than half the deaths EACH DAY from smoking related diseases, an expert said yesterday.

Now health organisations are to use this country’s first-ever ‘No Smoking Week’ to stress the deadly dangers of smoking — a threat which, according to the Director of the Health Education Bureau Dr. Harry Crawley, was not being highlighted strongly enough in the media.

Dr. Crawley was speaking at the announcement of the nationwide anti-smoking week organised jointly by the HEF, the Irish Heart Foundation and the Irish Cancer Society.

It will begin on March 4, Ash Wednesday and end on International No Smoking Day on March 11.

The no-smoking week, dubbed National Knottout, is being organised in conjunction with the country’s eight Health Boards.

The focus of the week will be on young people who will be urged not to start smoking — or at least to quit — “before it is too late.”

Dr. Crawley said that he would not wish to detract from the grave urgency of dealing with the threatened AIDS epidemic but twice as many people died from smoking diseases each day than had died here from AIDS.

The no-smoking week was being utilised by all involved to re-launch the message: “Smoking Kills.”

Chairman of the Medical Committee of the Irish Cancer Society, Dr. J. F. Murphy, emphasised the dangers of passive smoking — inhaling other people’s cigarette smoke.

The right of smokers to smoke undetected where their behaviour affects the health and well-being of others, he said.

The Society will be arranging a ‘phone-in’ advice service, offering tips on how people can stay off cigarettes. The advice will be available by dialing 10 and asking for Cancer Freefone.

Dr. Crawley emphasised that some 5,000 people died in Ireland each year from smoking related diseases.
Fresh AIDS cases denied

Reports that two new cases of AIDS have been diagnosed in Northern Ireland were dismissed last night by microbiology expert Prof David Simpson.

Prof Simpson, who leads the fight against AIDS in the Province, said: "We have had no increase in the number of cases here. The reports are not true."

Earlier, the Government confirmed that the number of cases of AIDS victims in Britain has risen dramatically to 686 the Northern Health Board declined to confirm or deny that two new cases had been diagnosed in the Ballyclare area.

"We have had only four cases of AIDS in Northern Ireland," said Prof Simpson. "Two have died and there have been no new contracted cases. The four we have seen have all been contracted outside the Province."

Fowler call for action

However, it is understood that as many as 30 people living in Ulster could be carrying the AIDS virus.

The Department of Health in London yesterday said that while 686 cases are known a further 355 people have died.

Nationally there were 76 new cases, including 62 deaths, recorded in January.

The Government has repeated its warning that the disease will claim 4,000 lives by the end of 1989.

Social Services Secretary Norman Fowler said: "This is the biggest monthly increase in AIDS cases that we have so far experienced.

"Although we must not read too much into one month's figures, they underline how seriously we must take the AIDS threat."

Worse was to come, he said, because the cases reported so far arose from events in the past. "Those who have now developed the disease contracted the infection some years ago. We shall have to brace ourselves for many more cases to be reported in the months and years to come.

"Our best estimate is that by the end of 1989 the cumulative number of deaths will be 4,000."

"The lesson of these figures is that we must act now. We are faced by a virus for which there is neither vaccine nor cure."

"Success in our battle against AIDS depends on changes in individual behaviour. No one should ignore the warning of these figures."

The figures again show that most AIDS cases are concentrated in London and involve mainly male homosexuals.

Of the 686 cases, 606 are gay men, compared with 26 haemophiliacs and nine drug abusers.

Three baby boys and three baby girls also have AIDS, however.

Four people have now died of AIDS after being given blood in the United Kingdom before screening was introduced. Another seven received blood abroad.

Among heterosexuals, 11 men and six women have AIDS, possibly after becoming infected abroad. Another one man and two women have died in cases where there was no evidence of infections abroad.
Blood bank accused of cashing in on AIDS fears
AIDS KILLS TWO A DAY

The statistic no-one can afford to ignore

by CHRIS MIHILL
Medical Correspondent

TWO people died from Aids every 24 hours last month.

The figures for January show the biggest monthly rise in victims since records on the disease began in 1982. Sixty-two people died and 76 new cases were reported.

Last night Social Services Secretary Norman Fowler said: "No-one can ignore the warnings of these figures."

The government now estimates that 4,000 people will have died from the plague by the end of 1989.

Mr Fowler said: "Those who have now developed the disease contracted the infection some years ago."

"We shall have to brace ourselves for many more cases being reported in the months and years to come."

"The lesson of these figures is that we must act now. Success depends on changes in individual behaviour."

"There was a strong reaction to the Department of Health report last night."

John Fitzpatrick, chief executive of the Terrence Higgins Trust, a charity which cares for Aids victims, said: "This is exactly in line with predictions. The government is just not spending enough. Clinics need huge resources but they are not getting them."

He called on Mr Fowler to link up with his charity to toughen up the advertising campaign.

A spokesman for the Royal College of Nursing said: "We have been predicting these numbers. Government funding is still insufficient."

The new cases bring the total number reported since 1982 to 666, with 366 deaths. Victims are still predominantly homosexual, with 664 cases and 332 deaths in this category.

Drug users account for just seven cases, with four deaths. Haemophiliacs, who received contaminated blood before screening was introduced, account for 25 cases with 19 deaths.

There was a small increase in the number of heterosexuals affected — two men and one woman, taking the total to 17, 10 of whom have died. Most of these are believed to have been infected abroad.

LONDON remains the worst affected area, but every single health region in Britain is now reporting cases.

In NORTHERN IRELAND, where homosexuality is still illegal, just two cases have been reported.

Turn to Page 2
Anti-Viral Drug Test Against AIDS Is Set For Infected Group

Welcome Drugs to Be Used In Effort to Quell Virus In Symptom-Free Men

By MARILYN CHASE
Staff Reporter of The WALL STREET JOURNAL

SAN FRANCISCO—The San Francisco Public Health Department soon will begin a test of anti-viral drugs in so-called healthy carriers of the acquired immune deficiency syndrome virus.

The test will team the anti-AIDS drug azidothymidine, or AZT, with the anti-herpes drug acyclovir against the AIDS virus in men who are infected but thus far free of symptoms. The effort is designed to find an agent that can prevent the development of AIDS. It is estimated that 20% to 30% of patients who test positive for AIDS antibodies fall ill within five to six years of being infected.

The maker of both drugs, Burroughs-Wellcome & Co. of Research Triangle Park, N.C., a unit of Britain’s Wellcome PLC, is sponsoring the test in conjunction with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, the University of California and the San Francisco Health Department.

First Practical Step

The test represents the first practical step toward a chemical preventive against AIDS for the estimated 1.5 million to 2 million Americans now infected with the virus, said Paul O’Malley, project director for the San Francisco City Clinic’s AIDS research study. Mr. O’Malley’s group has been studying 6,700 gay San Franciscans since 1985. Of these 6,700, 70% are thought to carry the virus.

The study initially will involve 20 men in a phase-one, or safety, study that is expected to start in April, Mr. O’Malley said. Phase-two trials, testing effectiveness of the drug combination, will be expanded to involve 400 to 500 men. AZT was shown last fall to prolong the lives and reduce the symptoms of patients with AIDS and AIDS-related complex. As reported, AZT—which has a planned brand name of Retrovir—was recommended last month for market approval by a panel of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Acyclovir, known commercially as Zovirax, is a treatment for herpes.

The idea for the AZT-acyclovir combination was “serendipity,” Mr. O’Malley said. In last year’s large AZT study, he explained, patients who were being treated simultaneously with acyclovir for recurrent herpes appeared to do “much better than the group as a whole. The theory is that there may be some synergy between the two drugs.”

Breaking Genetic Chain

Mr. O’Malley added that by combining the two drugs, the test will seek to reduce the customary doses of AZT, thus avoiding the debilitating anemia that can be a side effect of the drug and that have weakened some AIDS patients, necessitating transfusions and interrupting or halting treatment.

AZT and acyclovir both work by tricking viruses to accept chemical impostors into their DNA, thus breaking the genetic chain of the virus and blocking its reproduction.

Mr. O’Malley said the test is the first to offer hope of preventing AIDS in people who have tested positive for the AIDS antibody.

“We have had some men who previously declined (to hear) their test results, who now think it’s in their interest to know because they finally can take action,” he said.