Print Media

HIV Ireland

National HIV and AIDS Archives

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19th to 20th May 1987
Sex ‘trivialised’ in campaign says bishop

By Tommy Barker

SEX has been “totally trivialised” in the Irish AIDS campaign, the Catholic Bishop of Fenns, Most Rev. Dr. Brendan Comiskey declared last night.

And, said the outspoken bishop, the Catholic church’s position in relation to the AIDS threat and the use of condoms had not been clarified, despite a massive media information campaign.

Referring to AIDS and sexual practise, Bishop Comiskey said the whole debate had been trivialised. “Young people are told go out and get a condom, but what does that say about how we see these young people, and what view does it portray in particular of women,” he asked.

The Catholic Church was doing all in its power to deal with the AIDS problem, he said, and had given guidelines, provided counselling for victims and their families, and spent money on a campaign on the issue before the government’s public campaign had begun, he said.

Bishop Comiskey also criticised some clergy members who, during the television debates on the AIDS issue, appeared to favour the use of condoms to prevent spreading the AIDS virus.

Condoms of different forms have been around possibly for thousands of years, pointed out Bishop Comiskey, and he noted that they were still not 100% effective in preventing conception. If that is the case, then it is dangerous to suggest that they are a sure barrier against getting AIDS, he said.

However, the notion that AIDS is a punishment from God for wrongdoing, was, he said, “blasphemous.”

Media treatment of the Single European Act also came in for censure by Bishop Comiskey last night in Cork.

In a brief press interview, he declared that the media, and in particular television, had provided entertainment rather than information on the act.

Referring to Bishop Michael Murphy of Cork’s outspoken position against the health cuts at the city’s North Infirmary hospital, he said it was up to each Bishop to see how the cuts would affect his diocese.
Irish Aids babies will all die

Babies born with the Aids virus have only a slim chance of survival and half of them die before their second birthday, a medical meeting in Dublin was told last night.

But many drug addict mothers with Aids antibodies actually go on to have a second child, said Dr. John O'Connor, acting consultant at the National Drugs Advisory and Treatment Centre.

Almost half of about 50 pregnant addicts were found to have the Aids virus which initially caused shock and fear among the girls he said.

However, within weeks the addicted girls usually returned to their previous drug habit of sharing needles — and "safe sex" practices were rarely observed.

Dr. O'Connor told the Dublin City Health Committee of the Easter Health Board that in Germany women must prove they are clear of drugs for two years before they are allowed rear their own children.

Most of the Irish Aids antibody positive pregnant addicts had virtually a total lack of self esteem and they thought themselves "the scum of the earth".

Dr. O'Connor expressed serious concern about the emotional well-being of the many babies born to addicts.
US Aids vaccine trial gets cautious welcome

By Andrew Veitch, Medical Correspondent

British scientists yesterday welcomed the US decision to allow the first major trial of an Aids vaccine in humans.

"But, they warned, there is a long way to go before a vaccine is proved to be safe and effective enough for widespread use. "Don't leap up and down yet and say you've got a vaccine," said Dr Richard Todd, the Aids virus specialist at the Middlesex Hospital, London.

"The vaccine approved for testing by the US Food and Drug Administration yesterday was developed by the small Connecticut biotechnology company of Microgenexys. It consists of a protein derived from the human immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).

"First trials on 75 uninfected homosexual volunteers are designed to see if it raises an immune response that is antibody capable of killing the real virus — without unacceptable side effects. That will take six months to a year, an FDA spokeperson said.

"Phase II will be to give the vaccine to more people, testing for the same effects and to determine the best dose. That will take one to two years.

"Provided that all goes well, it will then be offered to hundreds of thousands — to see if it really protects against infection. That is the key test, and will take another one to two years.

"Only if those trials are successful will it be approved for widespread use. The manufacturers then have to build production lines to supply millions of people in need of protection against the virus.

"An estimated 50,000 people in the UK have been infected with 1.5 million people in the US and at least 10 million worldwide.

"The Paris scientist, Dr. Daniel Zagury, was the first to test an Aids vaccine in volunteers. He injected himself and a dozen volunteers in Zaire and France last year. It raised antibodies, but has yet to be tested on significant numbers of people.

The US trial will be carried out at the National Institute of Health, Bethesda, Maryland, by the deputy director of the National Institute of Allergies and Infectious Diseases (NIH). Dr. Clifford Lane.

The volunteers will have to be healthy, uninfected homosexuals whose current sexual behaviour puts them at low risk of infection, said the NIH director, Dr. Anthony Fauci.

"They must have had no possible exposure to HIV during the previous three months and they must agree to observe safe sexual practices while participating in the study," he added.

"The vaccine consists of a purified protein derived from HIV and not the virus itself, "No one can get Aids from the vaccine and we expect no adverse effects," said Dr. Fauci.

"At this stage we are not attempting to determine whether the vaccine is actually protective against HIV infection. If we obtain good results from the study we will expand our research."

Dr. Gale Smith and her team at Microgenexys, in collaboration with NIH scientists, made the vaccine by modifying the gene that produces the coat of the virus — the part that the body's immune system first "sees."

They inserted the gene into an insect virus called baculovirus which infects moths and butterflies. That acts as a delivery system.

The Food and Drug Administration in common with the British Committee on the Safety of Medicines, usually insists on comprehensive animal studies before approving tests on humans.

The FDA has short-circuited the requirement because the pandemic is spreading so swiftly. Whether the CSM and the British government would follow suit remains to be seen.

Teams in Glasgow, Oxford and London are working on potential vaccines.

• BBC Radio One is to launch a one-week "drug alert" campaign to warn young people of the dangers of injecting heroin and spreading the Aids virus. Ninety short bulletins will be broadcast towards the end of October, the Aids co-ordinator, Dr. David Harding said yesterday.
A public morality to counter the current pursuit of happiness

Hetty Eizinig looks
at a book which
explores the
hollow truths of
psychotherapy

"If main use to which psy-
chological knowledge has been
put has been the exploitation of
some people by others," states
David Small, professor of clinical
psychology at Longchamp Uni-
versity, in his latest book.

He concludes: "A very signifi-
cant part of the psychologist's
role is continuous with that of
the cunning man and the astro-
loger; and, as such, is a sham. The
evil that we do each other cannot
be undone, at least not so easily
as we like to think and the ravages
of the world cannot be erased."

Not the ravings of an evange-
list, but the considered words of
an intellectual. At 48, his hair
just turning a distinguished grey,
Small has been practicing psy-
chology since 1961. "Therapy has
become a massive industry. I don't
think most forms of therapy
acknowledge the limitations. "Measuremnt", "assessment", "in-
terpersonal skills" - we're seeing
the influence of psychology all
over in our post-managerial
culture."

... Looking on others
as salvation is a
disastrous mistake

not disenchantment. Taking Care, an Alternative to Therapy is Small's view of the damage we do each other, of the tragedy of our false
gods, mistaken dreams and explo-
itative relationships.

"We're in a hell of a mess in
this respect: we look on other
people as salvation - a disas-
trous mistake." 1

If rather than antidotes, psychol-
ogy and so-called scientific objec-
tivity are as much part of the
picture, "To our experience to
escape our vulnerability to pain...
we construct ... technological
and therapeutic solutions that
share a common origin in the
wistful magic of dreaming."

Hence our dogged belief in
the pursuit of happiness and its
success as a marketable commod-
y. But in real life "pain is
inescapable". Small opens his
hands emphatically.

"But people are terrified of
anything painful as if it were
good to destroy them." Like chil-
deren we want mummy to take
away the pain and make all safe
again. He adds severely: "Growing
up is a recognition that ultimate
bliss is not achievable and things
being difficult is not so bad."

Small is a stoic - dreams and
magic are not constructive forces
in his world. But one cannot ig-
nore the clairvoyant of the mir-
ror. Small holds up even if the reflec-
tion is a most discomforting one.
Taking Care is also, it is worth say-
ing, a good read - a psycho-
babble, crotchet and full of a
sharp wit. The main trouble, accord-
ing to Small, is that our society is one
which does not encourage mutu-
ality, most of us live in a state of
adolescent longing, consummants
and pain avoidance.

This is not Marxism in a
new wrapping - Small doesn't
simply lay the blame on capitalism.
We are, he argues, caught in the
same nexus of self-interest and
the illusion that happiness lies
only just round the corner.

But neither does Small blame
individual weakness or narcissism.
Contrary to psychological ortho-
dox, he sees us as ess-

HEALTH is edited by
Oliver Gillie

simply the reinstatement of social
values that place the fundamental
code of "doing as you would be
done by" above the current values
of competitiveness, cost-effec-
tiveness and expendability.

"The things that mean a lot to
me are not seen from a
stociat point of view," he

... looking for the right,
"Self-sacrificing, loving your neigh-
bour - these are valid aims".

Small's major professional
experiences were the time he spent
in a therapeutic community
where he was, he says, "the
archetypal democracy."

The effectiveness of the daily
community meetings left its mark.
"One can create a public
space to talk about things like
love and morality - otherwise
it becomes the spilling-out of pri-
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sicentrist and trivial." 2

Small sees therapists' role as
that of guiding and clarifying
- de-mystifying. "But insight on
its own isn't enough - why then?"
Spite of appearances, Small wouldn't, he says, want to
"theorize the map".

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"It is what I like doing best. But
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child abuse. It provides a safety
value, but this can also distract

from tackling the fundamental
issues.

Taking Care insists we must de-
velop a more caring attitude to
ourselves, our environment and
each other if we are to survive,
rather than believing we can
continue, as we have, to
"the responsibility to change is
too onerous to lay on the individ-
ual. We need a change in our
environment that acknowledges
the wrongs we have done, not just
corrects them."

Small's previous book, Euton,
and Reality, the Meaning of Ani-
xiety, which deals with similar
themes, brought criticism of
"theoressimism from professional col-
leagues". "I don't think they liked
me comparing psychotherapy to
prostitution - dispensing love
for money."
AIDS show

Sir — After watching the Late Late Show on May 15, I feel that I have to write to your paper to point out that the programme was unbalanced from the Christian, if not the Catholic point of view. I write as a Catholic layman, with training in moral theology.

If we are concerned about the future of our young people, it is not enough to teach them to use condoms to counteract their exposure to the dangers of getting AIDS.

Humane ty divorced from religious belief is doomed to failure. We, as Christians, must teach our young people the true and great values of Christianity. If we neglect to teach our young people that Christ taught us that the greatest value we have in the human form is charity, i.e. love for one another; unselfish love that excludes lust, passion and greed.

Perhaps another programme will be shown on TV with spokesmen able to speak more clearly on God's teaching, which will be of more help to parents in trying to help their children deal with this present onslaught on their young virtues.

D. ALEXANDER,  
Brookfield Avenue,  
Blackrock, Co. Dublin.
TELEVISION: BRENDAN GLACKEN watched “Today Tonight”, “Borderline”, “The Celts” and “Bronde”

CONDOMS AND CELTS

APATHY KILLS. Nothing new in that, but when the apathetic ones are maintaining herpes they call AIDS by passing AIDS along the line. After all, most addicts appear to be on a slow suicide kick of their own free will, so there isn’t much point in talking to them of “safe” sex, as Michael Henry observed (Today Tonight, RTE 1, Tuesday and Wednesday). What does the word “safety” mean to people who show hypodermics into their veins?

Henry’s report was comprehensively disturbing. In four years’ time it’s reckoned there will be a hundred million carriers in the world. Current evidence suggests most of these will succumb to the AIDS syndrome.

To judge by the report, Dublin’s addicts, who make up one of the highest risk groups, are simply not concerned about clean or dirty needles, about passing AIDS to their girlfriends/buy-friends, about the risk of babies being born with the virus. And Ireland has the highest rate of these births. Therapeutic abortion is not available, sterilisation is a rare option and, as Henry noted, almost stunning, “the babies, keep coming”.

Meanwhile, the hidden RTE camera filmed Dublin prostitutes, many of whom are addicts ready to provide “unsafe” sex at a price, being picked up in cars with rural registrations. What these clients bring home to wives and possibly unborn children may not be curable with penicillin or anything else.

Anyone called by the suggestion that addicts be given needles (and condoms) should realise the provision is not for the addicts, but for everyone else.

* * *

ON THURSDAY (RTE 1), Angus MacNally chaired a lively debate on the same subject in “Borderline”. An addict and AIDS sufferer related how he had been left for seven months before being informed of his condition; meanwhile, he was having unprotected sex with two girls. While some people just wouldn’t want to know, it appears there may be many more victims who simply haven’t been told by their doctors.

The demonstration of how to use a condom might have seemed ludicrously unnecessary — until a phone caller inquired if being on the pill was sufficient protection against AIDS... And when a change from rural Ireland pointed out that, for many people, buying condoms was still a huge source of embarrassment, it became clear there’s still a lot of growing up to be done in Ireland, and not just among the young.

FRANK DELANEY... pouting purposefully into the past.

FRANK DELANEY has begun pouting purposefully into our past in “The Celts” (BBC 2, Thursday) and it’s all horribly intense stuff, taking at its starting point the very interesting fact that the Austrian village of Hainzen is a very long way from Tipperary, and no doubt a more desirable place for some initial location work.

All that way to make the discovery that our ancestors were given to “childish boasting and garrulousness”.

The historical data presented so far is a little tense at times, but it’s clearly going to be a watchable series, with little expense spared, and lots of true-as-false stuff, such as the vision of Frank in dress and playing after-port war games. The vanishing of Veritegastor, however, felt something to be desired in terms of spectacle. Much more outrageous were the pseudo-historical reconstructions of our ancestors — the ladies in almost full underwear — drinking and brahming. The most credible aspect? All the men looked like Billy Connolly clones.

* * *

IN AN era peculiarly obsessed with secrecy and cover-up at the highest levels of power, it’s not too surprising that the TV production companies are tagging many of their prestige comedy drama serials with the “political thriller” label. What the viewer can then expect is another exposure of low standards in high places, with diners among the lawmakers and powerbrokers, and casual elimination of those who stumble on to the truth. Also to be expected is a good deal of confusion, as the snarling of the goings-on generally extends to the actual plotlines of the serial.

Latest in the genre in “Bronde” (Channel Four, Wednesday), the anonymous fellow being played by Stratford Johns, positively dripping with cultured evil and glossy imorality. The guileless foil is Robert (John Henshaw), a young university student so naive as to nostalgically recall Earlsfort Terrace in the 50s; he just happens to see Bronde casually flip a young boy over a bridge to his death, and the sticky web spins out from there, against an almost hilariously threatening Glasgow background. Robert subsequently finds himself visited by horrific hallucinations, nobody having warned him about get-togethers of the Eel Pie Society.
Irish Times
19th May 1987

Nurses back
AIDS show

At Bord Altranais, the Nursing Board, welcomed the public education programmes on AIDS.

Acknowledging the "excellent" role being undertaken by RTE it urged the Department of Health to provide extra resources for the training of nurses looking after AIDS patients.
RADIO: Howard Kinlay reviews a new
Radio 4, some of the AIDS debate on
Radio 2.

Sex, Sex and More Sex

ALTHOUGH this week's column is going to include some comments about sex (all consensual), it will not demonstrate the use of the condom, even on the tip of a pen. There will be those who will feel that this is most improper, for one reason or another.

However, it will not, I feel sure, be for the reason given by one woman interviewed on Radio 4 last week. During the war years, when she was what is now known as catty and misleadingly as "sexually active," she pointed out that "all men used French letters, unless they were cases." Times have not changed.

This was in a new series on the history of 20th century sex which began last Tuesday evening, produced by Peter Everett and presented by Helen Badeau. It provided a sad, poignant contrast to the AIDS programme being put out here.

The first programme dealt, rather rapidly, with broad attitudes to sex, and sex education in particular, over the last 50 years. What these came down to was two blunt facts. One, everyone agreed that sex education is best left to the parents. Two, everyone agreed that parents had told them nothing about sex, not since 1910 onwards.

This was not a wholly bad state of affairs in the view of some of those interviewed. "We didn't know what to do but we had great fun finding out," a voice from the 50s recalled.

"We learnt a lot about love-making," said another, simply because they had to avoid "going the whole way." Maybe AIDS will have the effect of helping people rediscover this joy of sex. Maybe heavy petting will come back into fashion, with courses being run in the art by those who used to sound off against it.

It was in the 60s, of course, that people really started to do something about all this groping in the dark. Martin Codie's historic film on "Growing Up" made the point that sexual experience was essential for normal development. At a time when even the Family Planning Association in Britain was refusing to give contraceptives to single people unless they could prove they were not for "pre-marital" use, Cole set out to give teenagers non-judgemental, accurate information.

The film must have had some effect. Not, to lose one's virginity, in a child of the '80s related, one simply got a contraceptive from the machine in the students union, brought the boy friend back home and fed him drink, "and sprung it on him."

This week's programme deals with prostitutes and pornography.

IT SEEMED like a good idea for Mark Cagney to carry the discussion on AIDS that had begun on television over to "Night Train" on Radio 2 (Thursday, 12.02 a.m.). In the event, nothing very new emerged. And the questions raised by listeners didn't help to add to the often-repeated information that had filled so much TV time.

On the other hand, it was clear from some of those questions that the information still needed to be repeated and repeated some more. One woman seemed to think that being "important" would protect her from the virus.

But the call that appalled was from a man called Joe. He wanted to know if the people who sold and the use of condoms would take responsibility for the one per cent failure rate of these devices. No-one asked him if the one per cent who try to prevent people using condoms would take responsibility for the 99 per cent of those who might, by their use, have avoided AIDS.

Such attitudes richly deserve the condoms than they are likely to invite. It would be interesting to know if those sort of people, who took (grabbed) responsibility for the moral of the nation over the last 80 years, feel there is any link between their behaviour and the present sell pass.

At least we can thank AIDS for having forced us to grasp that responsibility back.
Radical AIDS tests

THE Right-wing Government in the West German state of Bavaria introduced a radical package of anti-AIDS measures yesterday, including compulsory tests for certain foreigners.

State Interior Minister August Lang told reporters in Munich that all Turks, Yugoslavs and Eastern Europeans applying for a residence permit would be tested. Africans, Asians, North and South Americans and Australians would also be obliged to submit themselves to a test if they intended to stay in the state for more than three months, Mr Lang said.

The Christian Social Union Government of Prime Minister Franz-Josef Strauss has, however, backed down from its earlier plan to force visitors from other non-European Community countries to undergo checks after severe criticism within Community countries.

All citizens found to be infected with AIDS would be obliged to tell their partners and medical authorities who may require them to be taken to hospital, he said.

The health ministry in Bonn and all other political parties have denounced the plans as draconian.
Egg yolk may beat Aids

A PROMISING new Aids drug made from egg yolks is to be tested on patients at one of Britain's major hospitals, it was learned today.

The drug, known as AL 721, is believed to stop or slow down the progression of the disease without toxic side effects. The trial will involve 300 or 400 patients in seven international centres, including St. Mary's Hospital, London.

New Scientist magazine reported today that AL 721 was discovered at the Weizmann Institute near Tel Aviv, but that an American company, Praxis International, owned all world rights to the drug, which consists of a mixture of natural fats made from egg yolks.

Tel Aviv, but that an American company, Praxis International, owned all world rights to the drug, which consists of a mixture of natural fats made from egg yolks.

It is a yellow, oil liquid which patients can take either in orange juice or spread on bread. The 'chewy, sink' recipes for magazine added that "kit-preparations - resembling AL 721 had appeared in the American homosexual Press."
Bilingual Irish girls for Aids research

By MICHAEL LAVERY

Two Irish girls leave for Geneva next month to work on a world Aids research programme.

They are among dozens of French and German speaking young people winning plum jobs in European capitals.

Maureen Gaule (18), from Blackrock, Co. Dublin, and Slobhan Treacy (15), from Sligo, are joining the administrative staff of the World Health Organisation's Aids research unit.

The girls, who start on a salary of £16,500 tax free — rising to £18,000 after a month when they complete tests — graduate this week from Dublin's Language Secretarial and Business Centre in Belfe St., along with 98 other girls.

"About 25 per cent of the girls have already got jobs in Paris, Brussels, Frankfurt and Geneva," said Jean Killeen, director of the centre.

Two other girls, Mary McDonnell, Maynooth and Jackie Doyle, from Kerry have also secured jobs with the World Health Organisation, while three others are already working for the High Commission for Refugees in Geneva.

About 35 of the girls graduating have completed the centre's two year course, leading to a bilingual diploma. Over 90 per cent of these have already found jobs with law and accountancy firms in Germany, France and Switzerland.

Jean Killeen, who goes abroad every year on a jobs search, said this year she has been particularly successful. Irish girls. It seems, are much in demand as office staff abroad.

"The Irish have always been popular abroad. They tend to take their work very seriously.

At present, the centre has 250 students, and about 60 per cent of them want to go abroad. Now marketing has also been introduced into the second year diploma, giving the girls a valuable 'edge'.

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Ban on AIDS testing for life insurance

PEOPLE applying for health or life insurance policies in New York state will not be required to take a blood test for the presence of the AIDS virus, under a new state regulation announced by Governor Mario Cuomo.

Governor's announcement, during a speech at the Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center in New York City, was greeted with cheers and applause from an audience of several hundred people.

Civil rights advocates and leaders of homosexual groups have said that thousands of applicants for insurance policies have been denied coverage either because they were suspected of being homosexual or because they tested positive for the HIV-I virus, which causes AIDS.

Most AIDS victims in the United States have been homosexual men or intravenous drug users, their sexual partners and babies.

An Insurance Department spokesman, Kevin Foley, said there was evidence that insurance companies had denied policies to applicants who refused to be tested. "But we do not know how many are being subjected to such conditions."

The companies have asserted that they have the right to test applicants on the ground that heavy losses to policy holders afflicted with the fatal disorder could cause heavy underwriting losses.

In the district of Columbia, which has banned insurance companies from administering the test for the AIDS virus and a separate blood test that detects damage to the immune system, insurance companies have threatened to stop selling policies.

Foley said he did not expect a similar reaction in New York, which accounts for a third of the 33,000 AIDS cases reported nationally so far.

New Jersey and Connecticut states allow insurance companies to test policy applicants for the AIDS virus. Among the other states, California prohibits such tests and Massachusetts has adopted a policy against them.

Thomas Stoddard, executive director of the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, a homosexual rights organization, said that thousands of homosexuals or people who test positive for the AIDS virus but who may never contract the disease "would sleep better tonight now that the governor had lifted the threat of uninsurability".

Health officials have estimated that 400,000 people in New York state are infected with the AIDS virus.
Condom sales hit family clinics

THE TRADE in condoms has been hit the Irish Family Planning Association. The Association, once the almost sole supplier of the contraceptives, is facing financial problems now that condoms are widely available in chemists and other outlets in Dublin.

"Financially it had been a bad year for the IFPA," the association's chairwoman, Dr. Sheila Jones admitted in its annual report. "Condoms are now widely available in the Dublin area and our income which depended largely on condom sales, has been badly hit."

The IFPA, she added, received no money from the Eastern Health Board for the "many" patients which they see with medical cards and who cannot pay for the services.

But she vowed that the association's two clinics, at Cathal Brugha Street and Synge Street, would continue to see those clients, with some grant aid from the Department of Health, and from complementary organisations.

With the increasing threat of AIDS, young people will steadily become more aware of the need for sexual responsibility, said Dr. Jones, and it was vital that the IFPA be there to meet their needs.

"The defeat of the divorce referendum, the closing of two pregnancy advice centres and the banning of the book 'Joy of Sex' must mean that we have to prepare ourselves to stand firm against the forces of ignorance and repression in the future," she said.

Almost 6,000 new patients visited the association's two Dublin clinics this year.
AIDS curb by
W. Germany

The right-wing government in the West German state of Bavaria introduced a radical package of anti-AIDS measures yesterday, including compulsory tests for certain foreigners. State Interior Minister, August Land, told reporters in Munich that all Turks, Yugoslavs and Eastern Europeans applying for residence permit would be tested.
Tallaght aid for victims

THE Irish Association for Victim Support, which helps people affected by crime, has established a branch in Tallaght.

Already volunteers from the organisation are visiting up to a dozen victims a month offering them support and advise on how to rebuild their lives.

"But we need to let more people in the area know we exist", says Jim Higgins, one of the founder members. "Some people who have been burgled or become victims of crime in some other way may need our help but don't know how to contact us".

He said that while the figures showed a drop of 11½% in the crime rate in Tallaght there were still quite a lot of victims around.

"We give advice on insurance and welfare claims, accompany a victim to court, help them deal with gardai and other official bodies and generally provide a sympathetic ear in the aftermath of a crime", he said.

Mr. Higgins added that their initial success in contacting victims came about mainly through the help of two garda liaison officers in Tallaght, Inspector Eugene Doherty and Sgt. John O'Sullivan.

"Any victims who need help should contact either of them at Tallaght garda station 5111232 or contact me at 525174", said Mr. Higgins.
"Virus stores \textit{insane}—W.H.O."

By ANDREW VEITCH, Medical Correspondent

STOCKS of smallpox virus stored in Atlanta and Moscow should be destroyed by October, the World Health Organisation has demanded.

Countries still vaccinating their armed forces against the disease are urged to stop doing so. "They fear biological warfare," said Dr. Ralph Henderson, director of WHO's immunisation programme. "It's insane. Smallpox is a bad biological warfare agent and vaccination is causing damage to military recruits."

Four countries are known to immunise troops against the variola virus which causes the disease, senior medical sources say: the United States, Russia, Israel, and Libya.

Few people seriously believe that anyone would risk unleashing smallpox on the world, and none of the four countries, it is understood, is considering using it as a weapon. Military recruits are vaccinated, sources say, because leaders fear that the mere threat of releasing the bug would cause panic among unprotected armies.

But the live cowpox virus, vaccinia, used to protect against smallpox, carries a substantial risk of sometimes fatal side-effects. Brain damage is the most common problem: when it was given to civilians in Britain, more suffered brain damage than would have contracted smallpox, according to Professor Ari Zuckerman, the British Government's chief adviser on vaccines.

AIDS has brought a new hazard. Vaccinia may trigger the disease in someone who has previously been infected by the AIDS virus. An immune system damaged by AIDS may not be able to cope with a dose of cowpox.

A 19-year-old US recruit has died of a cowpox-like disease after being vaccinated against smallpox. It was subsequently found that he had unknowingly been infected by the AIDS virus.

That may not be much of a problem in countries where AIDS is still rare—the Soviet Union, for example. But in the US, where well over a million people have been infected, it is a cause for concern.

Production and use of biological weapons was outlawed in a 1972 convention. Stocks of the smallpox virus are known to be stored in two centres: Moscow and the US Centre for Disease Control in Atlanta.

Britain sent its entire stock of various virus to Atlanta in 1982. It had been stored at the former germ warfare centre at Porton Down, Wiltshire. A Defence Ministry spokesman said: "We do not vaccinate our soldiers against smallpox."

Officially, the virus is kept strictly for peaceful uses: in case smallpox reappears in a more resistant form and a new vaccine has to be developed in a hurry.

But the critics point out that the US defence Department's budget for research on biological warfare defence soared from $15 million in 1980 to $62.5 million in 1984.

Opinion within the military services favours the smallpox vaccination policy has not been unanimous, according to Dr. Neal Halsey and Dr. David Henderson, at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.

"They say, in a leading article in the authoritative New England Journal of Medicine; \textit{"Those knowledgeable about the potential of different biological-warfare agents regard smallpox virus as the least suitable — in part because it does not spread readily from person to person, and in part because an effective vaccine will confer protection within a week after administration."}

"They add: "One argument in favour of continuing vaccinations is that the Soviet Union is vaccinating its military services."

Evening Press
20th May 1987
Cutbacks ‘will hit inner city very seriously’

By Padrraig Yeates

HEALTH cuts were seriously damaging services and employment levels in deprived inner city areas, the Dublin South Inner City Development Association (SICCDA) said yesterday. It also said that health education coordinators were being redeployed because of cutbacks and claimed this would disrupt services for drug abusers and AIDS sufferers.

SICCDA claimed that 25,000 fewer outpatients would be treated at St James’ Hospital alone this year and there would be 5,000 fewer taken in for treatment.

Among services being hit were ancillary staff in many hospitals, home helps, youth development leaders, drugs counsellors, health education coordinators, community welfare officers and school medical assessors.

“This means that the most vulnerable members of the community will suffer and contradicts the Fianna Fail manifesto claim that there would be ‘adequate health facilities for prevention, diagnosis, treatment, education and rehabilitation, with more emphasis on community services’,” said Mr Neill Carley, of SICCDA.

“The south inner city has an unemployment rate of 60 per cent and due to the cutbacks many local people employed as temporary staff are returning to the dole queue.” In many individual flat blocks as many as 25 people, mainly women and often the only breadwinners for their families, were being laid off. There were six hospitals in the SICCDA area, all of them major employers of local labour.

There were also 300 recorded drug abusers in the Dublin 8 area, she said. “Last week the Department of Health made a full commitment to supporting AIDS sufferers, but in the same week the health board served notice that the health education co-ordinator and youth development leader, who dealt mainly with drug abusers, was being transferred.”

A spokesman for the Eastern Health Board said last night that health education co-ordinators were being “reverted” to their normal public health nurse roles to mitigate the effects of cutbacks “at the coalface”. The board said that these people did not deal directly with clients but co-ordinated services.

SICCDA provided a detailed list of health cuts in the area. Among the services currently under threat of closure were the maternity hospital in St James’s, a labour ward in The Coombe and the Sexual Assault Unit in the Rotunda.

Units already closed included the burns section in Dr Stevens’ (the only one in the country), the kitchen and varicose vein unit in St James’s and 67 beds at the Meath Hospital.

Lay-offs included all temporary staff at St James’s, 40 temporary staff in Dr Stevens, 30 trainee nurses at the Meath and seven staff nurses in the same hospital.
Irish Times
20th May 1987

‘Irresponsible’
AIDS victims

Some AIDS victims adopt an irresponsible attitude towards their condition, thereby running the risk of infecting other people, a Dublin hospital chaplain has claimed.

Father Frank Monks, director of the Chaplaincy Department of the Mater Hospital, said there were quite a few AIDS sufferers who could be really irresponsible and adopt a “to hell with you, I can do what I like” attitude.
Clinics defend abortion for AIDS carriers

The fact that Ireland is one of the few European countries where abortion is not available to pregnant women who are antibody positive to the AIDS virus, was deplored yesterday by the Defend the Women's Clinics campaign. In a statement, the group points out that a child born to an infected woman has a high risk of developing the fatal disease, and the mother also runs an extremely high risk of developing the disease herself by giving birth.

The clinics said in their statement yesterday, that they uphold the right of a woman who finds herself in this distressing situation as a result of AIDS, to at least be referred to a clinic in Britain for an abortion. The clinics include the Well Woman Centre and Open Line Counselling.
Bavaria to order AIDS tests

From Tony Catterall, in Bonn

THE STATE GOVERNMENT in Bavaria is to go it alone in West Germany in adopting restrictive and compulsory measures to contain the spread of AIDS.

A meeting of the state cabinet in Munich yesterday approved most of a catalogue drawn up by the Under-Secretary of State in the Interior Ministry, Mr Peter Gauweiler. The measures have been strongly criticised by all opposition parties and AIDS help groups, and rejected as a national model by the Federal Health Minister, Miss Rita Sußmuth.

A wide range of people in Bavaria can now be forced to undergo a blood test to see if they are carrying the AIDS virus (HIV), including applicants for certain jobs in the state civil service: anyone found to be infected will not be employed.

The State Health Office "is to begin investigations when it is proven that a person is ill (with AIDS), suspected of being ill, suspected of having been infected (with HIV), a carrier (of HIV), or suspected of being a carrier; or when it is to be assumed that someone can be suspected of being infected." Those suspected of being infected include, "in particular male and female prostitutes and intervenous drug addicts."

Should a person in any category refuse a blood test they can be ordered to do so by the Health Office, which can call on the police for assistance. In the event of the tests being negative, it must be repeated at three-monthly intervals so long as the person concerned "continues to belong to the circle of suspected people."

Prostitutes who are "suspected of carrying" HIV are to be "ordered to use condoms during intercourse." Those found to be infected are already banned from continuing in their profession.

The measures to be ordered by the Health Office if an HIV test is positive include the duty of "informing intimate partners" and doctors; and a ban on "donated blood, sperm, organs or tissue" and on mothers breast-feeding their children "unless the child is already HIV infected."

Infected persons "who are particularly stubborn" in ignoring the instructions "and hence endanger others" can be "isolated in hospitals or other therapeutic institutions" by court order.

Foreigners — other than those from "Western Europe and Scandinavia" — who apply for a residence permit will also have to be tested, and will be expelled if the result is positive.

Just before the Bavarian cabinet decision was announced, the Federal Health Minister, Miss Sußmuth told reporters in Bonn that she remained resolutely against compulsory measures.

She acknowledges that the Federal Epidemics Act gives authorities such powers, but along with her counterparts in all other states except Bavaria — questions whether it is appropriate in the case of AIDS.

The great fear is that with no hope of a cure, people who are affected will "go underground" and refuse whatever help is available. "Emigrants" from Bavaria were noted in other southern German states when the government in Munich indicated just over two months ago the measures it has now adopted.
Aids tests urged for prisoners

By Peter Evans
Home Affairs Correspondent

Prison officers called yesterday for all inmates to be screened for AIDS on reception and regularly throughout the term of their sentence.

A series of resolutions expressing concern about inadequate precautions against AIDS and hepatitis in prisons were passed at the Prison Officer’s Association conference at Southport.

Mr Jim Kay, assistant secretary of the association, said later that an agreement had been reached between the POA and the Home Office for the introduction of properly equipped isolation units, staffed by association members, wherever there was a need. Inmates with communicable diseases would also be treated there.

Mr Pat Garet, of Acklington Prison, near Morpeth, Northumberland, told the conference that compulsory screening was not seen as “an infringement of civil liberties but an eminently sensible solution to a real problem”.

However, the Home Office said later that a change in the law would be required to make screening compulsory. “It can’t be compulsory at the moment and no testing would be done without the consent of the inmate. The medical officer’s relationship with an inmate is very much the same as that of the GP with a patient outside.”

Mr Colin Evans, of Stafford Prison, said that an officer who escorted a prisoner diagnosed as AIDS positive was told by a doctor that in order to secure life insurance or in response to a questionnaire from an insurance company, he would be compelled to disclose that a blood test for AIDS had been carried out.

“This could result in insurance being refused or a hefty loading being imposed”, Mr Evans said.

However, the Association of British Insurers said: “Purely because you have had a blood test for AIDS doesn’t necessarily mean you will not get cover”.

London Times
20th May 1987
Global vaccination check on child Aids victims

By Thomson Prentice and Pearce Wright

Researchers are testing the effects of live vaccines on Central African children who are infected with the Aids virus to help ensure that an ambitious global vaccination programme, aimed at saving 3.5 million lives a year, is in no danger of adding to the spread of Aids.

Leading scientists believe further research is necessary into whether there is a link between immunization and the development of Aids among people already carrying the human immuno-deficiency virus (HIV).

In The Times yesterday, Professor Luc Montagnier, of the Pasteur Institute in Paris, expressed concern about the possible connection. He said he believed research, possibly using animals, should be considered.

Professor Peter Piot, of the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp, another leading Aids researcher, said yesterday: "I agree with this important scientific proposal. We have already started related research in Zaire."

The Zaire study is investigating the possible effect of measles, polio and tetanus vaccines on children who have HIV without symptoms of disease, and to compare them with children who have been immunized but are not carrying the infection.

Professor Piot said the study was essential to ensure the future of immunization programmes in developing countries. "The results seem encouraging in that there have been no signs of progress of Aids. However, the research is still at an early stage."

In Zaire, as in other African countries, Aids has been spread mainly through sexual contact. But research has shown that another leading factor has been transmission through contaminated needles and other medical equipment.

The World Health Organization, which was responsible for the immunization campaign that eradicated smallpox, has dismissed the theory that it may have inadvertently triggered Aids in some people who were carrying the virus but who were otherwise healthy.

It is striving to ensure that current and future mass immunization programmes do not add to the Aids epidemic. Millions of children in developing countries are to be immunized in the next few years against every disease for which a vaccine exists, with the aim of saving about 3.5 million lives a year.

World Health Organization officials discussed the problems of immunizing children with Aids or HIV infection last year. They weighed the potential risks of live vaccines causing the progression of Aids against the known risks of infants dying from diseases such as measles and polio if vaccinations were withheld.

They decided that halting immunizations because of the fear of Aids would increase deaths among children, while it would do little to stop HIV transmission.

Prison tests, page 3
Insurers Find Ways to Limit Losses Tied to the Disease

By MARKET CASE

The Wall Street Journal Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

The insurance industry has made some notable victories in a few key states by demonstrating to doctors and hospitals that AIDS does not pose a significant financial burden. Insurers argue that the disease is not as deadly as it once seemed and that the cost of treating AIDS is not as high as originally predicted.

AIDS Numbers: A Steady Increase

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
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<th>Medical care</th>
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Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control, Figure created to correct previous underestimating

The costs of the epidemic are increasing, but insurers argue that the disease is not as deadly as once thought. The Wall Street Journal reports on how insurers are limiting their losses tied to the disease.

The industry argues that rejecting such applicants is an illegitimate basis for拒绝, rather than a factor in the determination of premiums. It says that it is essential to consider the maximum potential for medical expenses.

The industry argues that the disease is not as deadly as once thought. Insurers argue that the disease is not as deadly as once thought and that the cost of treating AIDS is not as high as originally predicted.

The industry argues that the disease is not as deadly as once thought. Insurers argue that the disease is not as deadly as once thought and that the cost of treating AIDS is not as high as originally predicted.
Public Spending for AIDS
In U.S. to Exceed $1 Billion

By PAUL BASTIAN

Staff Correspondent of The Wall Street Journal
WASHINGTON -- When Gary Barlow, President Reagan's drug policy advisor, visited the National Institute of Drug Abuse in April, he told federal officials that the AIDS epidemic was sure to lead to a major increase in federal drug spending.

This year, the federal government is expected to spend more than $2 billion on AIDS research, education, and prevention. By 1993, the government is expected to spend more than $10 billion on AIDS-related activities.

The increase in spending is due to a variety of factors, including the rapid pace of the epidemic, the need for new treatments and therapies, and the increasing costs of treating and preventing AIDS.

The government's spending on AIDS-related activities is expected to increase by more than 40% per year from 1991 to 1995. This increase is due to a variety of factors, including the increasing costs of treating and preventing AIDS, the need for new treatments and therapies, and the increasing costs of the epidemic.

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