Print Media

HIV Ireland

National HIV and AIDS Archives

#NationalHIVArchives

21st to 30th June 1987
Hygiene advice
for dentists

ALL dentists have been urged to wear gloves and install modern, sterilizing equipment in their surgeries in a bid to prevent the transfer of AIDS.

The advice was given yesterday by Professor Irene Hillary, boss of the National Virus Testing Centre at University College Dublin.

She complained that the standard of hygiene in some of the country's surgeries was so poor that it could prove a health hazard to patients.

"I strongly recommend that people should change their dentists if he is not using modern surgical equipment," she said.

"While the dental profession is very conscious of the dangers being presented by AIDS, some are slow to change dated working practices."

For instance, they should all be wearing gowns, but some are unfortu-}

nately the virus from a patient, it is believed, that the infected patient's blood entered the dentist's system through a tiny gash on one of his fingers as he extracted a tooth.

The conference was also told of a case where a person with chapped skin on their hands became infected after coming into contact with contaminated blood.

Incubation

Professor Hillary warned that instances of AIDS in Ireland were bound to escalate in the years ahead, but she was unwilling to predict how much.

"The medical profession is continually revising its beliefs on the virus," she said.

"Originally it was thought that the incubation period was up to two years, but now it is being suggested it could be as long as two years."

She said the number of samples being received for AIDS testing at her centre...
CHINA'S embassy staff in Ireland have been ordered to undergo tests for AIDS.

Those who travel home on an annual basis will be checked for the deadly virus on their immediate return.

But officials remaining in Ireland for longer periods have been told to submit clean bills of health from their Irish doctors once a year.

A suggestion that the compulsory testing had been prompted by the recent deportation of an Irish AIDS carrier from China was dismissed yesterday by a spokesman at their embassy in Dublin's Ailesbury Road.

Third Secretary Mr. Wang Shutong said: "As far as I am aware the new regulations will apply to all our diplomats and trade attachés working abroad."

"China has a population of one billion and they must be protected."

"The virus has not been found within the native population, but we have to guard against it being brought in from outside the country."

Mr. Shutong said that all twelve staff at the embassy including ambassador Xing Zhongxiu would be tested.

"The new regulations were approved by the Chinese People's Congress last month and we were recently informed of them," he said.

The first officially announced deportation of an AIDS carrier from China took place last month when Dub-
Obligatory AIDS testing rejected

From Sean Cronin,
In Washington

THE AMERICAN Medical Association will vote this week on a report by its board of trustees that rejects mandatory testing for AIDS and urges legal safeguards for those who test positive. The report recommends voluntary testing.

The AMA report points out that the epidemic "is now more than six years old, and the growing magnitude of the problem has been apparent for nearly that long." It goes on to comment that the Administration's plan to spend $1 billion next year combating the disease is insufficient.

The AMA report asks the Reagan Administration to establish a commission with broad powers to develop a national policy acceptable to federal, state and local governments as well as industry, in order to deal with the epidemic.

"Testing should not be extended to all individuals anywhere who are considering marriage or to all persons in hospital," the AMA board of trustees say in their report.

"Public health authorities have advanced a plausible premise for their opposition to mandatory testing," the report continues. "Until those premises are shown ... to be incorrect, a policy rejected by the vast majority of public health officials, including the Centers for Disease Control and the Surgeon General, cannot be recommended."
Aids group welcomes £1m fund

By DON Lavery

THE setting up of a £1m Aids fund to help sufferers of the disease was welcomed by groups combating the deadly virus yesterday, who said that there should be close cooperation with them about the fund.

The £1m fund is to be administered by a charitable company set up by a group of medical, business and legal experts and will be based on the same model as The Ireland Fund, the body that raises money in America for Irish development.

The fund will be chaired by Judge Kevin O'Higgins and senior counsel Nicholas Kearns is also involved. It will be non-sectarian and non-political and aims to raise money which can be claimed by different bodies through an application process.

The objects of the proposed company, to be officially launched on July 13, include the establishment of treatment centres, the commissioning and maintenance of research projects and the provision of housing and other social and ancillary services to deal with all aspects of the disease.

Mr. Nicholas Kearns said last night that they had already made contact with a number of groups combating Aids and they would give them any help they could. He declined to be specific about how the £1m was to be raised.

Mr. Donal Sheehan of the Gay Health Action Group, which has been one of the most active and successful groups in educating the public about the virus, said the idea of a large scale charity to fight Aids was a good one but he urged close cooperation with groups who are already working in the area. He said there seemed to be group of well meaning and capable people involved but the fund should be representative of people and groups more centrally involved in fighting Aids.

Similar reservations were voiced by Ms. Marguerite Woods, of the Aids Action Alliance which includes a cross-section of groups such as the LGPSU, the Wellwoman Centre, the Irish Family Planning Association and Gay Health Action.

It was important that groups on the ground be involved because they had the experience in dealing with the Aids problem, she said. Earlier this month, it was revealed that the £500,000 allocated to the Health Education Bureau for the Government's Aids campaign has already been spent.

The Government was severely criticised by a variety of groups concerned with fighting the disease for its "watered down, ineffective" campaign.
AIDS TRIAL ON RISK BABIES

Dr. Daniel Zagury, the French scientist who last year injected himself with a potential AIDS vaccine, announced that he wants to start trials of an antibody treatment on babies born to mothers carrying the AIDS virus.

Dr. Zagury told an international conference in Stockholm that he intends to attempt to build on the advantage of the small "window" in which babies born to mothers carrying the virus appear to have a natural immunity.

The proposed treatment would probably be carried out within the first hour of birth. Some studies suggest that babies born to mothers carrying the AIDS virus have at least a 50 per cent chance of becoming HIV positive themselves. But a large European study presented here now finds that the chances of such babies becoming HIV positive may be as low as one in four.

Dr. Zagury’s proposed trials raise enormous ethical problems. Clinical guidelines lay down that informed consent is usually necessary before experimental substances can be used on volunteers.

Dr. Zagury, of the University Pierre et Marie Curie in Paris, also said that he has injected himself with a booster shot of his potential AIDS vaccine and appeared to have improved his potential immune response.

Last year Dr. Zagury produced a copy of the AIDS virus based on a form of the smallpox vaccine. The rebuilt virus appears to work by effectively "trickling" the immune system.

Dr. Zagury said he wants to expand the present trials of his potential vaccine on high risk volunteers in Zaire to a larger group in Europe.

A spokesman for the World Health Organisation said that they had not been approached by Dr. Zagury on either of his proposals.

Crack, the smokable form of cocaine, is adding to the risk of AIDS because increasingly young addicts are exchanging sexual favours for drugs.

Dr. Don des Jarlais, of the New York state division of substance abuse services, said that an increase in syphilis appeared to be linked to the rise in the use of crack and syphilis made transmission of the virus more likely.
Fears of AIDS hit blood tests on drivers

By FRANK KHAN and MARESE MCDONAGH

FEARS OF contracting AIDS is resulting in some motorists refusing to give blood samples to doctors in garda stations.

But one general practitioner involved in testing alleged drunken drivers told the Irish Independent yesterday that no danger exists.

Dr. Percival Patton said: “There has been a few cases where people objected, but all but one caved in when reassured. There is one case however outstanding which has yet to come before the courts.”

There was more danger to the doctor than to the alleged drunken driver, he pointed out, but he added: “I’d have no fear unless I was dealing with an open wound. And if I was, I’d use gloves.”

Another doctor described as “nonsensical” drivers’ objections to give samples for fear of the killer disease.

Dr. John O’Keeffe explained: “Syringes and needles are used only once in these situations. Everything in the kit used by the doctor taking a blood sample is sterile. A driver could not as well say he might get AIDS if he shook hands with the sergeant,” he added.

Meanwhile, a leading Catholic publication has moved to allay fears that communicants might contract the disease from a chalice.

In the latest issue of “Intercom” the magazine of the Catholic Communications Institute of Ireland, Father Edward Matthew declares: “The medical evidence overwhelmingly states there is no danger of contacting the AIDS/HTLV 3 virus by receiving communion from the shared cup.”

A new charitable organisation “The AIDS Fund,” has been set up which aims to raise £1m. to fight the disease here, it was announced yesterday.
Government accused over Aids danger to travellers abroad

By Jill Sherman, Social Services Correspondent

The Government was accused yesterday of not doing enough to protect British travellers from the risk of being infected by Aids abroad.

A doctor specializing in tropical diseases warned travellers to areas such as the sub-Saharan that they were 100 times more likely to catch Aids there than they were in this country.

Dr Paul Clarke, medical director of the Medical Advisory Services for Travellers Abroad (Masta), accused the Government of concentrating its publicity on the minimal risks of heterosexual transmission in Britain while overlooking the risks of receiving infected blood abroad.

Twenty-nine Britons had contracted Aids in sub-Sahara through sexual contact or infected needles but only 10 had caught the disease in that way in Britain, he said.

Dr Clarke, a former consultant adviser to the Ministry of Defence on infectious diseases, also called on the Foreign Office to set up a database of all areas in Third World countries where blood was being screened for the HIV virus.

"Some areas such as Nairobi have already introduced screening. British travellers should be aware where they are most likely to be able to receive blood free from infection", he said.

The Government should also put money into countries with a high incidence of Aids to ensure that screening facilities were more widely available, he said.

Dr Clarke challenged Mr Norman Fowler, Secretary of State for Employment, after his address on Aids and employment at the Confederation of British Industry. "There is a risk to travellers but nobody is addressing it", Dr Clarke said. Mr Fowler said that he would look into the issue.

Masta has in the past three months sold 5,000 travellers' packs, which include sterile syringes and needles, to companies such as ICI, British Telecom and Shell. The packs are also provided to Foreign Office and Ministry of Defence personnel.

The company, which is based at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, plans to include a small HIV blood-testing kit being developed by the American company, Dupont, so that travellers can test any blood used in transfusions.

The scheme has been backed by the CBI which yesterday launched a health information service for business men travelling abroad. The service, which is linked to the Masta scheme, gives company staff and advisers instant access to reliable health information worldwide.

Addressing the CBI conference, Mr Fowler said it was important for employers to emphasize both how Aids is spread and, more importantly, how it was not spread. "It is not dangerous to handle items such as cups used by an infected person and you cannot get Aids by sharing the same workbench", he said.

Employees should not be discriminated against if they had the virus and the Government would want to consider any examples of discrimination against individuals who were HIV positive.

Mr Fowler appealed to employers to deliver the same message that he had first given as Secretary of State for Social Services. "By 1991 over 180,000 people will have died of Aids in the United States, three times the death toll from the Vietnam war. Experts agreed that a vaccine or cure would not be developed for at least five years. "If the spread of Aids is to be contained it must be through changes in our behaviour."
How dare they test us for their disease

In about three months immigrants to America may be required to undergo a mandatory test for AIDS. There has been a letter from Nancy Kassebaum, a US Senator, warning about the spread of AIDS. This test is said to be mandatory and may be imposed on all immigrants. The mandatory test is to be conducted by E. Everett Klop, a US Surgeon General.

But it is not clear how effective this test will be. The mandatory test is not designed to be a screening test, but rather to identify those who are already infected. The test is also not designed to be a diagnostic test, but rather to identify those who are already infected. The test is also not designed to be a diagnostic test, but rather to identify those who are already infected.

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Hollywood cuts down on sex to give AIDS message

Actor Tom Hanks reaches for a box of condoms as he is about to take a lady to bed in the forthcoming film "Dragnet." He discovers the box is empty — and promptly calls off the lovemaking.

AIDS has started changing Hollywood scripts as well as Hollywood lives.

The scene involving Hanks, part of a comedy film version of the old "Dragnet" television detective series, is part of Hollywood's move to preach to film audiences that sex with numerous partners, particularly without taking precautions, can be lethal in the AIDS age.

In the latest James Bond film, "The Living Daylights," Welsh actor Timothy Dalton, making his debut as 007, confines himself to just one girl friend, actress Maryam d'Abo.

Bond used to share his talents with at least three women in a film. "Indiscriminate sex is out," Bond script writer Richard Maibaum said. "It is just the sensible and responsible thing to do in reflecting the world around us."

AIDS has hit hard in Hollywood where there are few actors who do not know of people who have died of the disease. Stars, led by Elizabeth Taylor, have taken part in numerous drives to raise millions of dollars for medical research into AIDS.

The death of Rock Hudson from AIDS in 1985 brought home the impact of the disease to Hollywood. The increasing number of obituaries of young actors and studio officials being published in one of the industry's newspapers, Variety, have deepened the sense of tragedy.

"Rock Hudson's revelation that he had AIDS brought home the personal threat to everyone," said Tina Sinatra, daughter of Frank Sinatra and an organiser of a group called the Entertainment Industry Support Committee for AIDS Project, Los Angeles.

Burt Reynolds, who once felt impelled to go on a television show to bitterly deny he had AIDS, Sammy Davis Jr., Shirley MacLaine and Burt Lancaster have played leading roles in making the public aware of the dangers.

The chief story editor of a major studio said he believed more and more films during the coming months would concentrate on single relationships. "Instead of having affairs and getting back together afterwards, a couple in a film will work out its problems without at least one of the partners jumping into bed with someone else," he said.

The Screen Actors Guild has said its 58,000 members must be given the right to refuse to take part in open-mouth kissing scenes if they fear this could give them AIDS. But, Shirley MacLaine, despite her fund-raising activities for AIDS research, believes screen kissing is safe. "Actors know how to act love scenes," she said. "We don't do deep kissing in love scenes. If any actor did that to me — I'd slap him."
Cut-price condoms launched

By Christopher Parker, Consumer Industries Editor

CONDOMS at 10p each—less than half the price of existing brands—will be launched shortly by a new nonprofit-making trust.

The contraceptives called Mates, are a central element in an anti-AIDS campaign initiated by Mr Richard Branson, founder of the Virgin Group. He has set up the Virgin Healthcare Foundation using £5m of his own money to protect young people from the threat of AIDS.

Mr Branson said he hoped shops, pubs, clubs, petrol stations, newsagents, and even airlines would stock Mates. Some 80m condoms would be supplied by the Ansell Corporation of the US.

All profits will go towards health education, patient care, and research. Mr Norman Fowler, former Health Secretary, had given him 100% support, said Mr Branson, who plans to see ministers next week to ask for financial backing.

Ms Anita Roddick, founder of the Body Shop chain, was also supporting the initiative as a trustee of the foundation.
MILLIONAIRE businessman Richard Branson introduced a cut-price condom yesterday to spearhead the war against AIDS.

The idea is to make condoms "as easy to buy as brown bread", the head of the Virgin empire told a London press conference.

Profits from sales of the Branson condom — which will be called "Mates", and retail at 10p sterling each — will go to a new charitable trust for AIDS Research, care and education in Britain.

Branson hopes shops, pubs, aircraft and filling stations will stock the sheaths when they go on sale in September. Showbusiness stars including Elton John have pledged support for the Branson campaign, which will be co-ordinated in the trust, the Virgin Healthcare Foundation.

The "Mates" brand will be made by the American Ansell Corporation and retailers will be asked to sell it at no profit to themselves.

Branson said yesterday he wanted the sheaths sold on such a wide variety of counters "that no one will ever have to be embarrassed or inhibited about buying a condom.

"If nothing is done we could be talking about hundreds of thousands of people being stricken with the AIDS virus over the next 15 years. Many of them will die. We are not prepared to wait and watch."

The Virgin entrepreneur, who has backed the "Mates" venture with £5 m. of his own money, said he was prompted to launch it "because I realised that my own children would not be able to grow up with the same attitudes to sexual relationships that I grew up with in the Sixties.

"Everyone agrees that the safest way to stop the spread of AIDS is to wear condoms."

It is estimated that about 120 million condoms are sold in Britain each year, and Branson's organisation has ordered 70 million.
AIDS man arrested

A MAN alleged to have sold his blood to several blood banks although he knew he had AIDS has been arrested on suspicion of attempted murder in Los Angeles.

"If this case goes ahead, it will be the first criminal prosecution in the United States of someone alleged to have donated blood knowing the blood was contaminated with the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) virus," said a spokesman for the district attorney’s office.

An American Red Cross spokeswoman said all blood collected was screened for the virus and any affected blood would be discarded.
AIDS blood donor arrest

A MAN alleged to have sold his blood to several blood banks although he knew he had AIDS has been arrested on suspicion of attempted murder, a prosecutor’s spokesman said in Los Angeles last night.

"If this case goes ahead, it will be the first criminal prosecution in the United States of someone alleged to have donated blood knowing the blood was contaminated with the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome virus," said a spokesman for the District Attorney’s office.

The investigation started when police, during routine questioning, discovered a receipt for the blood donation among the man’s belongings and upon checking discovered he had been diagnosed by a Los Angeles hospital as having the AIDS disease.

An American Red Cross spokeswoman said all blood collected was screened for the virus and any affected blood would be discarded.
AIDS victim arrested

An AIDS victim has been arrested in Los Angeles and accused of attempted murder. He is alleged to have sold his blood to several blood banks.
Embarrassment is a potential killer in the AIDS crisis, finds Rose Shapiro

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AIDS blood donor held

A man alleged to have sold his blood to several blood banks, although he knew he had AIDS, has been arrested on suspicion of attempted murder, a prosecutor's spokesman said yesterday in Los Angeles.

"If this case goes ahead, it will be the first criminal prosecution in the United States of someone alleged to have donated blood knowing the blood was contaminated with the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome virus," said Schaefer Sprowles, a spokesman for the District Attorney office.
GPs call for right to refuse Aids carriers treatment

By Jill Sherman, Social Services Correspondent

Doctors will call this week for the right to be able to refuse to treat a patient who is HIV positive (a carrier of the Aids virus) if the patient does not consent to that information being passed on to other medical professionals.

Doctors from the Brighton and Cuckfield branch of the British Medical Association have proposed a motion to be debated at the BMA's annual representative meeting in Brighton this week, stating that it is a doctor's professional duty to ensure that all information relating to a patient is made available to any other doctor involved in that patient's care.

"The patient's consent should normally be sought, but where this is refused it is not unethical for a doctor to decline to continue with the patient's management."

However, the secretary of the British Medical Association, Dr John Havard, made it clear yesterday that the BMA council would oppose the motion, due to be debated on Thursday.

"In this case we would support the General Medical Council's view that it is unethical for a doctor to refuse treatment on the grounds of any illness, and Aids should not be an exception", Dr Havard said.

However, BMA leaders are likely to support another motion also concerning the confidentiality of information relating to Aids. The motion states that if a patient is found to be HIV positive, the patient's GP and other medical professionals involved in the direct care of that patient should be informed.

Dr Havard made it clear that that should be with the patient's consent and he indicated that the council would not support the whole of the motion, which also called for information to be given to all health professionals sharing in the patient's care.

A further motion to be debated this morning calls on the British Medical Association to accept that a comprehensive health service free at the point of need is no longer economically feasible, and that alternative methods of financing the NHS should be considered.

The composite motion, which reflects calls from doctors in Brighton, North-east Thames and Northampton, was quickly knocked down yesterday by Dr Havard who made it plain that the council would oppose the motion.

"It is the policy of the BMA that there should be a National Health Service free at the point of delivery", he said.

"The BMA is committed to the NHS and we will do all we can to save the NHS."

Culture of crisis, page 16
Adam Mars-Jones feels he must be “drawn to the way that illness dramatizes health”, “When I think about it, I’ve written quite a lot about illness”, he says. “It contains the buried things about health that we don’t really want to confront.” In Hoosht-Mi, a short but shaggy-dog story which appeared in his first book, Lantern Lecture, the Queen contracts rabies after being licked by one of her corgis. The year of publication was 1981, and rabies, at that time, was the only illness he could think of (apart from an obscure one brought about by the consumption of inadequately cooked brains) which invariably turned out to be fatal.

Now, post-1981, there is a disease other than rabies which is proving to be lethal. The Darker Proof: Stories from a Crisis, by Mars-Jones and Edmund White, is published today. The word “Aids” appears once on the jacket, but is to be found nowhere within the book. Mars-Jones’s four stories and White’s two deal less with the disease and its case-histories than with the effect it has had on the consciousness of people who are living in close proximity to it.

Last year Mars-Jones acted as a “buddy” — someone who is available for practical help and moral support — for two AIDS sufferers. At the time, he had never considered the task as being something he could write about but, he admits, “I suppose the book wouldn’t have been written if I hadn’t buddied, because I wouldn’t have had a sense of knowing the reality of Aids, rather than just the culture of it.”

The idea for the book first came to him in December and, Faber and Faber proving willing, the manuscript was delivered in April. It included a story by White, An Oracle, already published in Christopher Street, and one by Mars-Jones, Slim, which had appeared last year in Granta, although he had originally never intended it as anything other than a one-off. In Slim, by replacing the word “Aids” with the African term for the disease, Mars-Jones hoped to remove many of the reader’s automatic responses to it.

The title of the volume proved to be tricky, since, with two writers’ work included, it could not be named after any one particular story. “We wanted something sombre, but not suicidal”, says Mars-Jones. Both men had been reviewing the diaries of Jean Cocteau. White pointed out a reference to a production of Racine, where Cocteau had instructed the actors to echo their rehearsal for the actual performance, but to pull “a darker proof”. “The idea is either that these stories are rather more sombre versions of two writers’ styles and preoccupations or else that, in a crisis, there is a darker proof of humanity, of friendship, of love and all that.”

Writers of fiction, and writers of gay fiction in particular, are still struggling to get to grips with Aids, which for them is a literary problem as much as a physical one. “What you notice”, says Mars-Jones, “is that gay books tend to be set in 1981. It is so much easier to pretend that Aids haven’t happened. And, in many of them, Aids is just an excuse for a nostalgic look at the Seventies.”

Short stories, reasons Mars-Jones, are more effective than a novel would be, simply because the illness itself has its own “very potent narrative drive — seemingly towards death, as things now stand. And it’s very hard to write a novel resisting that whereas in a short story you can choose your own time-scale. You can somehow make an aesthetic slice which avoids the push towards an apparently obvious solution.”

The “aesthetic slices” in this volume deal with a broad range of emotion and experience, unclouded with medical facts. Though depressing, they are surprisingly not unduly so. White’s stories are more valedictory, his characters moving from Paris to Venice to Crete as they mourn the passing of a golden age. Mars-Jones is rather more pragmatic, dealing with the day-to-day realities of coping with reduced immunity, fatigue and the attitudes of family and friends.

“The nearest I can get to internationalism is a New Zealand character. But I hope the effect is that this isn’t something that’s just happening to particular individuals, but to a lot of people. At the same time we can’t write about Africa, because it’s not something we know about. There’s bound to be an oddity in the fact that the continent most directly affected by the illness doesn’t get a look-in.”

The Darker Proof: Stories from a Crisis by Adam Mars-Jones and Edmund White is published on July 6 by Faber and Faber at £3.95.
Aids man on murder charge

AN alleged male prostitute, who sold his AIDS-contaminated blood to a plasma centre, was charged yesterday with attempted murder.

District Attorney Ira Reiner said he would ask that Joseph Edward Markowski be held, without bail, following arraignment on ten charges including attempted murder, assault and attempted poisoning.

"I know of no other case," Reiner said. Markowski (29), admitted he sold blood knowing he might be spreading the disease. He allegedly told authorities: "I know that AIDS can kill. But I was so hard up for money I didn't give a damn."
Govt. AIDS campaign "inadequate"

A local county councillor has hit out at the Government's "totally inadequate" publicity campaign about AIDS.

Fine Gael councillor for Templeogue, Mr. Martin Lynch, claimed at a recent meeting of the County Council that the Government's publicity campaign would only "perpetuate further ignorance" about AIDS.

He told the meeting that more explicit information should be distributed through local libraries and in official government handouts if the disease is to be tackled.

Information pamphlets about AIDS were "practically hidden" when he visited three chemists in south Dublin recently, he claimed.

"I was made to feel highly embarrassed when I enquired about the leaflets which were produced from under the counters of these chemists," he told the meeting.

The chairwoman of the meeting, Dun Laoghaire Cllr. Betty Coffey said she "wholeheartedly" agreed, with Cllr. Lynch, but said a motion — calling for greater publicity about AIDS — was tabled by her over a year ago and was due to be heard by the Council in the coming weeks.

But, Cllr. Lynch claimed: "By the time we get around to discussing Cllr. Coffey's motion we could have an AIDS epidemic throughout the Dublin region."