Print Media

National HIV and AIDS Archives

#NationalHIVArchives

1st to 10th August 1987
Condoms ad makes TV history

History will be made on British TV tonight when the first ever condom advertisement is screened. The 20-second commercial, featuring two young romantics, carries a safe-sex message for the 16-25-year-olds and is made by LRC Products, the makers of Durex.

The advertisement, to be screened on ITV tonight after nine o’clock, ends a 27-year ban on TV advertising of birth control, and features a young couple separated by a fence. Flash newspaper headings warning about AIDS, unwanted pregnancies and cervical cancer roll past, and to the sounds of Frankie Goes to Hollywood’s “The Power of Love” the couple reach the end of the fence and fall into each other’s arms. Then the slogan “together You’re Safer with Durex” flashes across the screen.

The advertisement will be used as part of a major cinema and TV campaign over the autumn and winter.
Wellcome finds support in City on AIDS headway

INVESTORS have been piling into last year's market newcomer Wellcome because so far it has produced the only antiviral drug which has been licensed for use in the battle against AIDS.

Yesterday the shares leapt a further 38p to 449p when the company's half-time results topped the most optimistic City forecasts with a 26% jump to more than £81m.

The AIDS drug, Retrovir, has not contributed a penny to profits in the first-half since sales only commenced in recent weeks. The first financial benefits will accrue in the current six months, but the real returns should come next year.

Official statistics at the World Health Organisation show that there are more than 45,000 registered AIDS sufferers worldwide, while in the US latest figures show that 1.5m Americans have been exposed to the disease.

Retrovir is not cheap — a course of treatment is about $10,000 a year — and Wellcome is not prepared to reveal its profit margins, but it does not anticipate problems with its pricing. It has been approved for use against AIDS in 12 countries so far.

The first-half profit improvement came evenly from improved margins, up two points to 15%, and improved turnover, up 12% to £557m. The bulk of the company's sales came from North America (42%), followed by the rest of the world (26%), Europe (19%) and the UK (10%).

Sales of Wellcome's other major antiviral drug Zovirax, which is used to combat shingles and genital herpes, soared 54% to £71m and further growth is expected, especially in the Japanese market.

Trials continue, testing Retrovir with Zovirax and other drugs like Interferon, in the quest for a more effective AIDS combatant. First-half R & D costs were marginally up on last time at £65.4m and Wellcome should have at least two years to recoup the money it outlaid on Retrovir before a competitor gets a rival product on the market. Analysts are looking for about £165m profits in the full-year.
Cork Examiner
2nd August 1987

New journal surveys AIDS attitudes

THE first issue of the new medical journal, Irish Doctor, launched by Health Minister Dr. Rory O'Hanlon in Dublin yesterday, contains a survey of the attitudes and knowledge of Irish family doctors on AIDS.

The Minister said the importance of the contribution of the family doctor might be gauged from the fact that many AIDS cases had been cared for in their own home.

The new journal, under editor Dr. Aidan Meade, will address the needs of the Irish family doctor and will be circulated free to all practising doctors and doctors in training.
More sexy than the swinging '60s, say 48pc

THE TERM 'Swinging' has become synonymous with the 1960s, with its youth culture boom of flower-power hippiedom. The decade of the Summer of Love contained all the glittering ingredients - Sex, the discovery of the Pill, free love (the discovery of Acid and marijuana) and Rock and Roll (the discovery of The Beatles).

Yet despite depressions, assassinations and AIDS, the current percentage of youth who see the 1960s as swinging higher and lower than the previous decade.

According to the survey, 48 per cent of the young people perceive themselves as being more promiscuous than the '60s generation. In fact, 95 per cent of these women believe that their level of power is growing.

In contrast, the eight per cent who say this current generation is being less promiscuous than the status quo cite the designer as AIDS - which implies that a fear of AIDS is leading to a reduction in promiscuity.

The influence of TV and films, with a vote of 34 per cent, is largely blamed for changing the moral standards of today.

It would seem that the designer, sex and violence on TV programs such as 'Passions,' 'Melrose Place' and 'Baywatch,' are now dominating the scene and that AIDS is no longer a factor in people's lives.

THE TERROR OF AIDS, a fear of death, has been a reality in recent years. The survey reveals that the view on the sexual revolution is changing.

The fear of AIDS is leading to a reduction in promiscuity, which implies that a change in behavior is taking place.

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Irish Times
4th August 1987

Condom ads case

A LONDON High Court bid by a university teacher to block screenings of television advertisements for condoms was adjourned yesterday. Mr William Spring (42), of north London, is arguing for a declaration that the advertisement shown this month on ITV "offends good taste and decency" and is unlawful. He also wants an injunction to stop further showings. Adjourning the case, the judge said Mr Spring would need leave from the Attorney General or from a High Court judge to bring judicial review proceedings. No date was fixed for any resumed hearing. — (PA)
39 die of AIDS

ANOTHER 39 people — more than one a day — died in the United Kingdom from AIDS last month, taking the UK death toll to 529, the Health Department said yesterday. The number of people reported to have AIDS now stands at 935, compared with 870 at the end of June. — (PA)
Some junkies go through up to 20 different de-tox sessions

He would use up to £200 worth of heroin a day if he could
A self-confessed ‘junkie’
Michael Dixon has
the AIDS virus.
Last year heroin killed the
mother of his two
children. Here, he
speaks about his
world of crime,
sickness and
desperation.

He’s afraid of the fact that he
will die soon and says he
wants to be with his
children. If I could
just have some help,
I will go back to
Jervis Street. He
shrugs. He was dead
in his alcove.

He can’t hold
food and
sweeps his
sweater to
be a cream
shirt.

He cut the
drug
and
for
sustenance.

He
for
at
33
thru
between
and
for
those
with
AIDS
Jervis
Street
Fiend may have given AIDS to 40 children

A Texas insurance salesman who kept computer records of sexual contacts with juveniles may have exposed 40 children to the AIDS virus before he was found dead in June, officials said.

A post mortem determined that 38-year-old Jimmy Ethridge carried the virus, said a probation officer.

Ethridge was found dead in his bedroom with a bullet wound to his head. No arrests have been made.

During the investigation, police found enlarged photographs of nude children and a computer containing information about them, the officer said.

The addresses and names of the 40 children were discovered only yesterday after the computer code was broken.

The probation officer said she interviewed 10 children living in the Marlin area. The rest live in Waco and in Louisiana, Arkansas and Mexico. Most were 13 to 16 years old, although some were as young as seven.
At least 70 pharmaceutical companies worldwide are now developing drugs or vaccines against acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), with over 80 different drugs and 25 prototype vaccines currently under study, according to the new Scrip Report on AIDS Therapies and Vaccines.

Companies are accelerating the development of AIDS therapies, and regulatory authorities are “fast tracking” these products to the market, so it seems likely that Wellcome’s Retrovir (zidovudine), the first major product to be launched for the treatment of AIDS, will come up against competition soon. Indeed, information in the new Scrip report suggests that several drugs may be available by the end of next year.

.. clinical trials ..

Potential anti-AIDS drugs in the late stages of clinical trials include ICN’s antiviral, ribavirin; HEDDuPont’s mismatched double-stranded RNA, Ampligen (which is reported to restore immunological function with no clinically-significant side-effects); Imreg Inc’s immunomodulator, Imreg-1; Institut Mérieux’s (Rhône-Poulenc) Imunthrop and Newport’s Isoprinosine.

Among products with activity against AIDS in early human studies are Roche’s deoxycofytidine (DDC, reported to be a more potent inhibitor of HIV with fewer side-effects than zidovudine); Degussa’s a-penicillamine; Rhône-Poulenc’s antiviral, HPA-23; Adria’s (Erbamont) ribavirin; Ethigen’s (formerly known as Praxis Pharmaceuticals) AI-721; peptide T and granulocyte macrophage colony stimulating factor (GM-CSF).

In addition, in vitro studies are being conducted with numerous compounds to test for activity against the HIV virus. Among these are castanospermine, a plant alkaloid under study by researchers at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, and amphotericin B methyl ester, a water-soluble derivative of amphotericin B under development by Printek, of New Jersey, US.

.. combination therapy ..

Most products under development for the treatment of AIDS are either antivirals or immunomodulators, and many groups are now looking towards a combination of these two categories as an approach to effective therapy, eg zidovudine in combination with Ampligen, alpha-interferon, interleukin-2 or Imunthrop. Other drugs being tested in combination with Retrovir in order to produce a more effective, less toxic regimen than Retrovir alone include aciclovir (Wellcome’s Zovirax), probenecid (which is thought to lengthen the half-life of Retrovir), ketoconazole, and trimetrexate.

Another approach is to block the entry of the virus to the T4 cells. Drugs thought to act in this way include AL-721, peptide T, Contracan (a saccic acid derivative developed by researchers at the Hammersmith Hospital, London, UK) and the anti-epileptic, phenytoin.

Clinicians from two hospitals in London, UK, are hoping to produce beneficial effects by transfusing AIDS patients with plasma from asymptomatic HIV-seropositive patients who have shown high levels of antibodies to the virus. Another clinician, from Illinois, US, is using “insulin potentiation therapy”, a protocol in which insulin is used to enhance the pharmacological effects of antiviral drugs, in an attempt to treat AIDS patients.

The Scrip Report on AIDS Therapies and Vaccines gives a comprehensive overview of these and other therapies in development for the treatment of AIDS and AIDS-associated infections. Details of mechanism of action, manufacturers, stage of development, latest clinical trial results, adverse reactions, and future development plans are included. In addition, the report presents the latest figures available from the World Health Organisation on the number of AIDS cases and estimates of people infected worldwide, outlines the discovery, structure and replication of the HIV virus, progression and spread of the disease and pattern of the epidemic, and identifies suitable targets for AIDS therapies.

.. vaccines ..

Also included are details of prototype AIDS vaccines in development by more than 25 organisations, including 17 pharmaceutical companies. Dr Zagury and colleagues from the Pierre et Marie Curie University, Paris, France, are the first researchers to have administered an AIDS vaccine to humans. Two US groups, Bristol-Myers and Viral Technology Inc, have filed INDs with the US FDA for their potential anti-AIDS vaccines, and many other groups are conducting studies in chimpanzees.

The Scrip Report on AIDS Therapies and Vaccines is available from the Scrip Bookshop, ref BS 155, at a price of £7.5 ($148, DM 271, Fr 868). For details of ordering and payment, see page 2 of this issue.

A separate comprehensive review of the latest developments in the HIV testing market, entitled Testing for HIV and AIDS: the next five years, ref CBS 62, is also available from PJB Publications at a price of £7.5. This report traces the development and summarises the position of the HIV testing market as of mid-1987 and outlines likely advances, both technical and commercial, over the next five years — details on request from the Scrip Bookshop.
Household bleaches may be too weak

PEOPLE who dilute household bleach (hypochlorite) in the recommended way for mopping up spilt blood may end up with a solution only half as strong as they would expect. Research by a senior microbiologist has shown that the amount of available chlorine, the active ingredient in bleach, can vary between 5 per cent and 11.6 per cent. He is sending his data to the Hospital Infection Society, which has recently reconvened its working party on AIDS in order to update its guidelines.

The chlorine in bleach kills blood-borne viruses such as hepatitis B and human immunodeficiency virus. Most official recommendations say that, for clearing up blood spills, a solution of bleach containing 10,000 parts per million of available chlorine should be used. This is equivalent, they suggest, to a 1 in 10 dilution.

David Coates, senior microbiologist at the public health laboratory in Preston, Lancashire, says that a 1 in 10 dilution of bleach may not always result in a solution of the expected strength. There are two reasons for this failure. First, bleach does not keep well. Secondly, not all household bleaches contain 100,000 parts per million of available chlorine when they leave the manufacturers.

Coates bought 10 types of bleach at supermarkets and tested them. He found that four out of six brands of thickened bleach contained 10 per cent or more available chlorine. But three ordinary bleaches contained only 5.6 per cent, 5.0 per cent and 5.4 per cent available chlorine, respectively. Only in one on the bottle state the chlorine.

The recommendations on clearing up spilt blood and other body fluids have stood at least since the late 1970s, when people began to be aware of the risk of catching hepatitis B from blood. The figure of 10,000 parts per million of available chlorine seems to have been decided arbitrarily.

Graham Ayliffe, professor of medical microbiology at Birmingham University, said that blood inactivates hypochlorite. Human immunodeficiency virus would probably be killed by a much more dilute solution of bleach, provided that the blood did not remove all the available chlorine from the solution, leaving none to kill the virus. This is why it is important to add a solution containing an excess of available chlorine.

Coates says that there are three ways of ensuring that the level of available chlorine is as high as the official recommendations suggest. One is to use Milton, which contains 1-1 per cent available chlorine, undiluted. Milton is relatively stable, but much more expensive than household bleaches. Secondly, tablets of sodium dichloroisocyanurate (NaDCC) can be dissolved in water to provide a solution of known strength.

The third alternative is to sprinkle granular NaDCC onto the spillage. This preparation has the advantage of soaking up the spill, rather than spreading it (New Scientist, 30 April, p 31). In addition, organic matter does not inactivate NaDCC in the same way as with bleach.

The Preston Health Authority now recommends that its staff use granular NaDCC rather than Milton for clearing up blood spills. Coates says that NaDCC is more expensive to use than ordinary bleach, but cheaper than Milton.

Ayliffe, in Birmingham, said that his local accident and emergency department also uses NaDCC in preference to bleach. He hopes that in future, guidelines will include granular NaDCC as an alternative to bleach. Ayliffe added: "Generally speaking, if people want to set up a first-aid kit, we would recommend that they get NaDCC powder for clearing up blood spills."

AIDS Monitor is edited by Sharon Kingman.
AIDS MONITOR

Link with syphilis grows stronger

DOCTORS at St Mary's Hospital in Paddington, London, are studying what role syphilis might play in AIDS. The researchers, led by Dr. David Goldmeier, say that high-dose treatment to get rid of Treponema pallidum in the cerebrospinal fluid of patients infected with HIV may be effective in treating syphilis.

In the United Kingdom, the disease is caused by Treponema pallidum, which is transmitted through sexual contact or contaminated blood products. In the United States, it is transmitted through sexual contact or contaminated blood products. In the United States, it is transmitted through sexual contact or contaminated blood products.

Dr. Goldmeier said that his team is studying the effects of a new treatment regimen for syphilis patients infected with HIV. The regimen involves a combination of antibiotics and antiretroviral agents. The researchers hope that this approach will be effective in treating syphilis in patients infected with HIV.

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Researchers are devoting a great deal of effort to the search for a vaccine or antiviral drugs to combat the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Yet anecdotal evidence suggests that factors such as diet and exercise may be important in determining whether someone with HIV infection progresses to AIDS. If researchers could substantiate some of these theories, it might mean that people infected with HIV could minimise their chances of developing AIDS by modifying their lifestyle.

So far, investigations into such “secondary prevention” have been few and far between. However, researchers at St Mary’s Hospital, in Paddington, London, have begun to study some of these factors. Adrian Renton, research registrar, says that they are particularly interested in the role of dietary fats because it is well known that lipids can affect the function of the immune system, perhaps by their influence on the viscosity of cell membranes.

The team is also looking at the potential influence of dietary fats on other sexually transmitted diseases. Renton says: “In herpes, for example, you have a cyclical emergence of lesions [herpetic sores] which anecdotally is linked to a variety of factors, including being run-down.” He and his colleagues are interested to know whether it is possible to demonstrate scientifically a link between fat intake and events such as a herpes attack, or the development of AIDS in someone infected with HIV.

Renton and his co-workers hope soon to publish the results of a pilot study, which was supported by the charities Immunity and the Jefferis Research Wing Trust. The team is currently applying for more funds to run a large-scale survey. Their work has recently been aided by the donation of a new computer system, costing £8000, from a group of computer companies in Britain.
Irish insurance firms to get tough on AIDS

QUESTIONNAIRES on AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases will be used by most insurance companies by the end of the year, according to Mr. Aidan Cassells, secretary of the Irish Insurance Federation.

Already a number of companies have introduced an AIDS questionnaire which includes questions about applicants' backgrounds and lifestyles. And one company has had to pay out £30,000 to an AIDS victim's family.

Blood tests may be required of applicants in high risk categories, but Mr. Cassells does not envisage a situation where there will be widespread blood testing in Ireland.

"The problem is much more "acute in the USA and Britain and life assurance companies there have not introduced widespread blood testing. They are still selective and work on a case by case basis."

However, if the disease escalates in Ireland, assurance companies may be forced to adopt such a measure, he claimed.

He said the large payout was an isolated case and points out that there are a number of policies already in force which would have been issued five years ago when AIDS was unknown.

"It's a risk inherent in the business, there's nothing we can do about existing policies."

"If a person fills in the new questionnaire incorrectly and says 'no' where they should have said 'yes' then the company can avoid a disclosure there," added Mr. Cassells.

"Now that the disease has been identified and the potential risk realised, assurance companies can eliminate that risk."
Expert warns against single AIDS test
Expert warns against single AIDS test

A LEADING Irish expert on AIDS warned yesterday that screening laboratories which use only single test on those in the at-risk groups run the danger of recording false negative results, and a spokesman for the insurance industry confirmed that questions on AIDS were now routinely included in assessments for life insurance.

Professor Irene Hillery, director of the National Virus Reference Laboratory, said that there were now a range of screening tests for AIDS antibodies, but all of them had a percentage failure rate. "I would be concerned if screening laboratories were only using one test with those in the at-risk groups. We use several different tests here, and when we get a positive result we confirm that with other tests."

The possibility of recording a false negative test result on someone who did have AIDS antibodies arose not only because all tests had a failure rate, she said, but also because AIDS antibodies could be present in the bloodstream for up to three months before they showed in tests.

According to the current issue of New Scientist, instant tests to determine whether someone has been exposed to the AIDS virus will soon be available and will require no special expertise to carry out or read. One now being developed by the American company Du Pont is based on "membrane technology" and requires only a drop of undiluted blood.

"The new generation of tests raises the issue, however, of how closely regulated their use and distribution should be," New Scientist states. "British guidelines on tests for HIV were laid down at a time when tests needed a significant quantity of blood, and specialist equipment or knowledge to carry them out."

Mr Aidan Cassells, secretary of the Irish Insurance Federation, said yesterday that insurance companies had begun introducing questions related to AIDS into assessment questionnaires some months ago. Commenting on an award of £30,000 made to the family of an AIDS victim by an Irish insurance company, Mr Cassells said that beneficiaries of policy-holders who contracted AIDS after policies were taken out would be entitled to insurance compensation in the usual way.

Insurance questionnaires now routinely ask whether an applicant is HIV positive, has full-blown AIDS or is being counselled in relation to AIDS. If an applicant who has replied in the negative subsequently dies of an AIDS-related problem, insurance companies will investigate whether answers given at the time were truthful, Mr Cassells said, but the onus of proof of deceit would be on the company.

There are also questions related to lifestyle on insurance questionnaires, and companies may at their discretion require medical examinations and blood tests for those in high-risk categories such as drug abusers or homosexuals, he said, but no special groups had been targeted for particular investigation. The procedures related to AIDS risk would be in line with those now followed for other high-risk health problems. "Regrettably, as things now stand, victims of AIDS are uninsurable in the same way that victims of terminal cancer are uninsurable because there is no cure," Mr Cassells said. This was true in other countries as well as in Ireland.
Aids 'to peak in 1998'

Britain's Aids epidemic is likely to peak in 1998, then fall and level out, insurance experts said yesterday.

The peak year of 1998 could see 48,000 people dead and 63,000 sick with Aids said consulting actuaries H Watson & Sons.

But the numbers were then likely to drop as the "Aids generation" died out.

However, despite its prediction, the firm believes that premiums for new life and health policies are likely to rise.

The latest Aids projections were based on a model devised by Prof. David Willie, a partner in the firm.

He assumed that every person infected with the Aids virus would ultimately develop the disease and die, that 20 per cent of men were homosexual, and that the disease would not spread significantly into the heterosexual population.

He also admitted that the peak numbers in 1998 could be 30 per cent or more higher if public health education was not effective.

Whatever assumptions were made, however, deaths should peak in the "late 1990s with a drop thereafter to a stable state".

The model is designed to help insurance companies assess the potential impact of the disease and set premiums.
Dr. Ruth Westheimer

ASK DR. RUTH

Ban certain blue movies

Q. Sometimes you advise people to make use of specifically erotic materials or ideas to help improve their sex lives. The production of these things involves so many crude, offensive, abusive depictions of children — and the porn business is dominated by criminals. Doesn’t that bother you?

A. Yes, and when only so-called “adult” movies are made with the forethought of what goes on after the screen goes black, the whole industry is vulnerable to criminal activity.

Concerned about girlfriend’s son

Q. I have nowhere near the amounts of money I think I’ll need when my parents are no longer around. I’ve considered a career in real estate, but I’ve said no to that because I think I’m not cut out for it. I’ve also thought of studying to be a lawyer, but I don’t know if I have the patience. What should I do?

A. It’s important to explore different career options and decide what you are passionate about. It’s also important to consider your strengths and weaknesses. Don’t be afraid to seek advice from professionals in the field you are interested in.

Lover is sex crazy

Q. I’m trying to have sex with my girlfriend, but she seems to be obsessed with sex. She won’t stop talking about it and makes me feel like I’m not a good enough partner. What should I do?

A. It’s important to communicate with your partner and express your feelings. It’s possible that your girlfriend is experiencing a sexual desire that is not necessarily healthy. It’s also possible that she is feeling pressure from society or certain groups to engage in sexual activity. It’s important to consider whether you and your partner are sexually compatible and to seek professional help if needed.

Do faithful couples need condoms?

Q. Do faithful couples really need to use condoms? I’ve heard that being faithful is the best way to protect yourself from sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

A. Yes, even if you are faithful, you can still get STIs. Condoms are an important preventive measure to protect yourself and your partner from STIs. It’s important to use condoms consistently and properly to prevent the spread of STIs.
US threatens alien AIDS tests

The United States may be forced to test aliens for the AIDS virus in an effort to curb the spiralling costs of treating victims of the disease. James Mason, director of America's public health research centre said yesterday.
Town terror after boys preyed by AIDS victim

JIMMY ETHRIDGE has been dead more than a month now, killed with a .22-calibre rifle shot to the head. Still, no one knows yet the consequences of his secret life in the small Central Texas town of Marlin.

Ethridge, a 38-year-old insurance salesman, had been exposed to AIDS. His landlord thought he was a saint. She did not know that Ethridge preyed on young boys, not only in Marlin, but in Louisiana, Mexico, Arkansas, Mississippi and California. Ethridge kept track on his computer in repugnant detail. And when investigators finally broke his secret computer coding early this week, they found the names of 54 young boys whom he seduced.

Some or all of them may be at risk of AIDS, and at least 40 other computer discs have yet to be checked by state health officials to see if they contain more names.

Now the grim task begins of trying to track down all those children and test them for the deadly disease that Ethridge may have spread.

Ten of the 54 youngsters named in the computer files live in Marlin, and six of them have been found and tested thus far, but the results are being kept confidential. None of the children in other states have yet been tested.

"It's everybody's nightmare," said Police Chief John Trousdale. "The town is really shocked at what is going on."

Marlin is a community of 7,000 people that was once known for the healing qualities of its mineral springs. AIDS has not been a hot topic at the Plantation Inn restaurant -- at least not until recently.

Jimmy Ethridge moved into the town three years ago, but he had moved around a lot before that. He was burly, pleasant man who seemed to have a particular fondness for children.

At one point, he used to regularly walk into a local convenience store and if there were young boys playing the pinball machine in the back, he would furnish the coins for dozens of games.

He rented a small, comfortable house. Neighbours were to tell the police later that there always seemed to be youngsters at his home when he was there. The police would also learn that Ethridge lavished gifts on the children. He gave one child two horses, another a television set, a third a car.

This summer, Ethridge went on vacation to Mexico. And when he returned in June, he found a 13-year-old boy at his home. The boy had been living with Ethridge, with the consent of his mother, but the insurance salesman had instructed him to stay away while he was gone.

An argument ensued. Ethridge and the boy chased each other around the house with rifles. And, according to the police, the boy said Ethridge grew tired and sat on the bed. That is when the rifle the boy was carrying went off -- an accident, the boy insists.

District Attorney Tom Senon has decided not to prosecute. Police Chief Trousdale thinks the townspeople wouldn't mind if the boy was given a medal.

After the shooting, the boy fled, and when a house painter found the body an estimated 29 hours later, they found pornographic magazines and tapes and other paraphernalia scattered about the house. Much of it involved pictures of nude or semi-nude young boys, including a number of them taken on Ethridge's Mexico trip. The policemen began wearing rubber gloves to examine items in the house.
The price of fear

IT'S an ill wind... world wide fears about AIDS have made condoms big business in Malaysia, the world's largest producer of natural rubber.

Takaso Rubber Products, (the country's most extensive rubber company) owned by the Tee family and offering a line in condoms with names such as 'Romantic', 'Any-time', 'Rocket' and 'Tiger' is profiting hugely from media campaigns in Europe, the US, Japan and Australia that promote the condom as the only known method of thwarting transmission of the AIDS virus.

Malaysia last year produced 1.45 million tons of natural rubber, 18 per cent of it in latex concentrates used to make synthetic rubber. The country's export revenues from latex products has shot from 12 million dollars in 1986 to 94 million dollars in 1988.

Tee How Cut, founder of Takaso Rubber Products, acknowledges his company's "tremendous upsurge in sales is directly linked to AIDS" and openly worries about the discovery of a vaccine.