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National HIV and AIDS Archives

#NationalHIVArchives

21st to 26th August 1987
A PLAY ON AIDS 'The Normal Heart', which opened at Dublin's Project Arts Centre on Thursday drew a strong emotional response from the audience.

MAIRE CROWE talked to the director, Michael Scott.

**Breaking through the wall of silence around AIDS**

Sometimes it is necessary to state the obvious: and so Michael Scott, director of 'The Normal Heart', a play which opened at the Peabody in Dublin on Thursday night, "There are more theatres than toilets, topping and tailing and glitz which it was once taken for granted that every AIDS sufferer was lost for ever to the state of the art."

The opening scene of a play with the heart on the line of a heart, with Michael Scott's character, Michael Harrington, who met the end of his life in New York's World Trade Centre, gives an insight into the atmosphere of the play and the urgency of the situation.

People are not only of the heart, but of the heart, and the play is a reminder of how much is at stake. Scott is a character who is not only of the heart, but of the heart, and the play is a reminder of how much is at stake.

The play ends with Michael Scott in the role of the character, Michael Harrington, who is not only of the heart, but of the heart, and the play is a reminder of how much is at stake.

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Anthony Heald (left) and Colin Mullen in the Normal Heart at the Project Arts Centre.
AIDS test for bishop

BISHOP Sebastian Kolowa, head of the Lutheran Church in Tanzania, was forced to take a West German test for AIDS before he could renew his residence permit in Munich.

The Bavarian State Government adopted stiff measures in February in an attempt to combat Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

Bishop Kolowa arrived in Munich last autumn with his wife for a year's stay for theological studies.

A spokesman for the Bavarian Interior Minister refused to confirm the report, noting only that all foreigners seeking a residence permit in Bavaria must undergo an AIDS test. — (AFP)
The politics of AIDS

Theatre: Colm Toibin on 'The Normal Heart'

Just before the second half of 'The Normal Heart' at the Project on Thursday night a man in the row in front of us handed a leaflet to the biome beside me outlining the failure of the Irish Department of Health to respond adequately to the needs of the gay community threatened by AIDS.

It was a useful reminder that what was happening on stage is also happening here, that a play about AIDS in Ireland would take much the same shape.

"The Normal Heart" is essentially a documentary play about AIDS in New York between July 1981 and May 1984. It is a play about private grief and public inertia.

The main protagonists are a group of gay men who set about raising funds and consciousness to prevent the spread of AIDS among homosexuals in the city.

For most of the play no one knows what the disease is. It is clear it is contagious, but unclear to what extent. The cost is frighted not just by the disease, but by the realization that, because it is going to affect mainly gay men, no one is going to do anything about it.

They are going to be let die one by one, without any public money being spent on information or research.

That they are a pretty run down bunch is what makes the play, for the most part, extremely enjoyable.

Ned (Anthony Newfield) is loud and paranoid. His search is not just for justice but for love, and he finds Felix (Joseph Taylor) who is a real nice guy.

Ned's anger is too much for the others, who don't want him to run the campaign. This task is given to Bruce, (B. J. Hogg) who is also gay as well as being a vice-president of a bank.

The other activists include Derek Chapman as Mickey, constantly in danger of losing his job as the campaign progresses and full of views about sexual liberation and the gay man, as well as Jonathan Sharpe as Tommy who plays the part of a Southern belle, but is also a real nice guy.

At the scale of the crisis becomes apparent, those men start to discuss and deliberate on the politics of their situation.

The vice-president of the bank can't go on television to talk about AIDS. Ned can't rid himself of guilt; they wonder if gay liberation is about the availability of sex and nothing else. All around them their friends are dying.

A doctor in a wheelchair (Gabrielle Reidy) is the only one who understands the seriousness of AIDS. Her efforts to get something done are in vain.

Felix discovers a purple blush on his foot; just as two of the men in the doctor's waiting room have been diagnosed as having AIDS earlier in the play, he too is told he is dying.

There are problems with the production, particularly in the first half, but also with the writing. But in a way, this doesn't matter.

The play is an attempt to alert us to what happened in America to show that the slowness of the authorities is doing something about AIDS was due to a prejudice against gay men, a matter which an Irish audience will no doubt understand.

It is also a powerful documentary, full of humour, melodrama and interesting characters.
Radiators for Aids gig

Top punk group of the Seventies, the Radiators, from Space are to perform for an Aids benefit concert in Dublin in September. The concert, which is being organised by the Gay Health Action group in association with the Aids to Fight Aids campaign, will be held in the Hawkswell, in Dublin on 13 September.

"We'd been talking to Phil Chevron in London about doing something, and then he suggested that the Radiators might reform for one concert," said Mick Quinlan of GHA.

"It's the only time that Chevron is free from the Pogues, so we decided to go ahead with the concert then," he added. The last time the Radiators performed together was in 1983, but they were one of the most promising bands to emerge during the punk craze.
AIDS VACCINE:
First human tests in U.S. approved

The Food & Drug Administration last week took its first step on the uncertain road to AIDS prevention by approving the first human testing in the U.S. of a potential vaccine against acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

The testing, which is expected to begin by October, will involve vaccinating 81 healthy volunteers with a purified envelope protein of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), the retrovirus that causes AIDS. The first phase of testing, expected to last six months, is designed to assess the vaccine's safety and ability to produce an immune response, and to determine proper dosage. Later tests will address the crucial question of whether the vaccine can protect people from HIV infection.

Even if the vaccine passes these tests with flying colors, "it will be a considerable time, probably the mid-1990s," before this vaccine, or any vaccine, will be ready for general use, cautions Anthony S. Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy & Infectious Diseases (NIAID), which is sponsoring the trial.

Most of the volunteers for the initial vaccine tests will be homosexual men, the high-risk group that has been struck hardest by AIDS. NIAID scientists will select 75 healthy male homosexuals who test negative for HIV antibodies and who agree to observe safe sexual practices. As of mid-week, more than 80 men had already volunteered for the trial, according to an institute spokeswoman.

The first phase of testing will be conducted at the National Institutes of Health clinical center in Bethesda, Md., under the direction of Fauci's colleague, H. Clifford Lane. If this phase is successful, researchers will assess the vaccine's safety on 100 to 200 volunteers in a year-long second-phase trial. In a third phase of testing, the vaccine's effectiveness against AIDS will be studied in thousands of volunteers who are at high risk of becoming infected.

The vaccine's active ingredient is a 160,000-dalton glycoprotein from HIV called gp160. In the life cycle of the AIDS virus, gp160 is the precursor protein that splits into the virus's envelope protein, gp120, and a transmembrane protein called gp41. A modified gp160 was used because it elicits a better immune response than does gp120, the more obvious choice.

The vaccine was manufactured and tested through a joint effort of NIAID and MicroGeneSys Inc., a small biopharmaceutical firm in West Haven, Conn. NIAID researchers constructed an infectious molecular clone of HIV from two HIV isolates. This clone was given to MicroGeneSys scientists, who isolated the gene for gp160 from it. After modifying this gene, the firm's scientists inserted it into the genome of a baculovirus, a virus that infects such insects as moths and butterflies. The recombinant baculovirus was added to insect cells in culture. These cells, when infected by the virus, expressed the foreign gene—that is, they produced the modified gp160 protein.

When the vaccine was tested in animals, the results were "highly encouraging," NIAID scientists say. The vaccine produced high levels of neutralizing antibodies to HIV, especially in guinea pigs. And no serious adverse effects were seen, even at doses much higher than would be given to humans. But because animals don't come down with AIDS, there's no way short of human tests to determine whether the vaccine can protect against the disease.

Scientists hope that the immune systems of vaccinated individuals will mistake gp160 for the complete AIDS virus and produce antibodies to attack the virus. The idea is to set up a biological defensive shield against HIV before a person is actually exposed to the virus. Although the immune system produces antibodies in response to HIV, they don't always keep infected people from coming down with the fatal disease. Whether vaccine-induced antibodies are any more protective against AIDS won't be known for some time.

In addition to antibodies, researchers also hope to see the so-called cell-mediated immune response. This will help the body recognize and destroy infected cells. "We're looking for a way to make the virus more visible," Fauci says. "If we can show that the body can respond, we've made an important step forward."
cell-mediated immune response, in which "killer cells" are induced to seek out and destroy the AIDS virus. This response was seen when the vaccine was tested in chimpanzees. Fauci stresses that volunteers who take the vaccine cannot get AIDS from it because it doesn't contain potentially infectious viral RNA or complete virus particles. "We expect no adverse effects beyond those that sometimes occur from other immunizations, such as some redness and soreness at the site of injection," he says.

If the vaccine does induce antibodies, as expected, vaccinated individuals will test positive on the tests now used to signal exposure to the AIDS virus.

Several other candidate vaccines are awaiting FDA's go-ahead to begin testing in humans. Some of these candidates use either outer-coat or inner-coat proteins from the AIDS virus. Others are based on a non-pathogenic virus called the vaccinia virus that has been engineered to express specific HIV proteins.

A recombinant vaccinia-based vaccine recently made headlines when Daniel Zagury of Pierre & Marie Curie University in Paris injected himself and a dozen other volunteers in Zaire with it. Tests showed his vaccine is safe and produces an immune response. But the results have not been promising enough to warrant larger-scale trials.

N.Y. county may ban plastic wrap for food

New York's Suffolk County on the eastern end of Long Island is considering a ban on plastic packaging for food.

A bill now before the Suffolk County legislature would prohibit retail establishments in the county from selling anything that is not packaged in biodegradable materials. The bill sponsored by Steven Engelbright (D-East Setauket) already has the support of 11 other legislators. The bill requires 10 votes to win approval. The legislature can vote on the bill as early as Sept. 8.

A principal target of the bill is the polystyrene "clam shell" packaging used by many fast food restaurants to hold hamburgers, chicken, and other fast foods. The ban would exclude certain packaging uses such as for raw meat, vegetables, and pharmaceuticals.

According to the Society of the Plastics Industry, polystyrene packaging-including "clam shell" packaging as well as cups, plates, and other items—is the largest single end-use category for polystyrene. It accounts for more than 25%, or 1.1 billion lb last year, of all polystyrene used in the U.S. According to the latest available figures, polystyrene used in packaging was up 29% to 541 million lb for the first five months of 1987.

Many other localities likely are watching the Suffolk County bill. The county has become a trendsetter in other types of environmental legislation, such as smoking restrictions, bottle return laws, and phosphate detergent bans.

NAS warns against rigid biotechnology controls

The National Academy of Sciences has issued a rare "white paper" on the regulation of biotechnology products, saying that rigid and strict controls on all such products are not justified. The report calls for a regulatory classification system that would reflect potential risk based on the type of organism and its intended use.

"Biotechnology is a key technology in America's future," commented Frank Press, NAS president, on release of the report. But with respect to recombinant DNA organisms, "a wide range of viewpoints has been presented both in scientific publications and in the mass media." Because of this, NAS set up a committee of biologists with a broad range of experience in biotechnology to explain the scientific position on release of genetically engineered organisms into the environment.

NAS issued the report two weeks earlier than planned in response to controversy surrounding the unauthorized release of genetically altered bacteria into the environment by a Montana scientist (see following story).

Chaired by Arthur Kelman, head of the department of plant pathology at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, the committee spent several months interviewing ecologists, molecular biologists, geneticists, and applied biologists on the environmental release issue. The main conclusion is that "there is no evidence that unique hazards exist either in

Like many other localities, Suffolk County is running out of landfill space and is attempting to find solutions to its solid waste disposal problems. The Suffolk County town of Islip made national news recently as a barge containing garbage from the town made a trip up and down the East Coast looking for an appropriate landfill site.

Ken Lane, assistant director for state government affairs for SPL, says that Berkeley, Calif., also has proposed a measure similar to the one under discussion in Suffolk County. "We're traditionally opposed to that type of measure," says Lane, who adds that food packaging is only a small part of the entire waste stream. "Suffolk's ban won't do anything to solve the landfill crisis." He suggests a total solid waste management program for the county that would include recycling where it is economically viable, incineration, and composting.
AIDS Vaccine Is Being Slated for Tests

An experimental vaccine for acquired immune deficiency syndrome has gained Federal approval for human trials — the first such vaccine to be so approved in the US. Dr. Robert E. Windom, assistant secretary for Health & Human Services, said last week that Food & Drug Administration had issued a go-ahead, and that National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases is beginning its tests in volunteers.

Developed by MicroGeneSys, Inc., a biopharmaceutical firm in Westport, Conn., the vaccine is made of protein derived from the genetic material of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

HIV attacks and destroys a particular group of cells in the immune system, thus permitting normally treatable infections to result in debilitating and life-threatening illnesses. More than 60,000 people in the US have been diagnosed as having AIDS since 1981, and nearly 60 percent of them have died. It is estimated, however, that more than 1 million people in the US are infected. "Preventing the spread of infections with HIV in the United States may take a decade in this country and a decade in the world is of paramount importance," Dr. Windom said in heralding the clinical study."Although education is a powerful public health tool for limiting transmission of AIDS, in order to halt the global AIDS epidemic we must have an effective vaccine."

Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, director of NIAID, said that the study will be carried out at the clinical center at National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Md., by Dr. H. Clifford Lane, deputy clinical director and a senior investigator at NIAID's laboratory of immunoregulation.

The researchers will study the vaccine in 75 healthy HIV-antibody negative homosexual males whose current and recent sexual behavior may be regarded as "low-risk." Dr. Fauci explained that the volunteers 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.

FDA commissioner Frank E. Young said that he was pleased that the study was starting. "This is the first vaccine to reach the stage where we can approve it for studies in humans, and we are optimistic about this approach."

He warned, however, that "the public should realize that this is a first step — and many steps are still to be carried out before we have a vaccine, whether it is this one or another, that is safe and effective enough for general use."

Dr. Fauci emphasized that the study is designed to assess the vaccine's safety and ability to produce an immune response, and to determine proper dose.

"The vaccine consists of purified protein from HIV and not the virus itself," Dr. Fauci stressed. "Therefore, no one can get AIDS from the vaccine, and we expect no adverse effects beyond those that sometimes occur from other immunizations, such as some redness and swelling at the site of the injection."

"At this stage," Dr. Fauci pointed out, "we are not attempting to determine whether the vaccine can actually protect people from HIV infection.

He concluded, "If we obtain good results from this study, we will expand our research. At this point, of course, it is too early to predict whether this vaccine will undergo widespread efficacy trials, but we are quite hopeful.

"This study is a natural outgrowth of the overall goal of NIAID's laboratory of immunoregulation, which is to understand the immunopathogenesis of AIDS. Dr. Fauci added, "NIAID scientists have been working closely with scientists at MicroGeneSys in developing the product and in assessing the potential of animal studies using the vaccine." Dr. Malcolm A. Marck, chief of the laboratory of molecular virology at NIAID, furnished the company with an HIV clone that he and his colleagues constructed from a North American HIV isolate, NYS, and a European isolate, LAV.

The vaccine was developed using techniques similar to those employed in the manufacture of other, "recombinant" vaccines. To make the vaccine, MicroGeneSys inserted the modified gene for the entire HIV envelope precursor protein, gp160, into the genome of a vaccinia virus — one that infects such insects as moths and butterflies. The recombinant virus is then grown in an insect cell tissue culture system, which produces the gp160.

Scientists from Oceagen, a division of Bristol-Myers Co., and George Washington University, have also applied for permission to begin human testing of their proprietary AIDS vaccine.
Garda heard his biter had AIDS

A YOUNG garda broke down in tears in the witness box in the High Court yesterday as he remembered watching a television programme and hearing that a prisoner who had bitten him on the ear was an AIDS carrier.

He had been told that if he wanted insurance he would be “loaded” like some car drivers. He was hoping to buy a house within the next year but had not got a mortgage yet.

Professor Fielding said the garda suffered from a form of viral hepatitis which did not usually progress to cirrhosis. The best the garda could hope for in the future was that he could continue to have chronic persistent hepatitis.

He would remain relatively well rather than unwell. At that level they advised people to abstain from alcohol. The other level was that the disease could progress to cirrhosis and then, depending on his life style, he could continue for another ten to fifteen years. The garda would have to be monitored for another two to three years.

Mr. Hugh O'Flaherty SC (instructed by Noel G. Hughes and Co.) said the possibility was that the disease was like a time bomb ticking away in the background.

Mr. Justice Hamilton said this was a potentially explosive problem. It must, however, be of great relief to the garda that he was not suffering from AIDS antibodies.

There was a real possibility the condition might progress within the next two years from being benign to being active which could lead to cirrhosis and if this occurred he would have a working life of about ten to fifteen years.

It was a case, said Mr. Justice Hamilton, where he should make an interim award and the Minister for Finance had consented.

Based on the fact that the garda’s quality of life had been affected, the condition he was suffering, the mental trauma he was presently undergoing and the risks inherent in his condition, he would make an interim award of £75,000 and adjourn the matter for three years.
AIDS...now we know

THE media are putting so much emphasis on AIDS it is becoming more of an embarrassment than the education it should be.

Scarcely a day will pass without a reference to AIDS in some newspapers.

The regular dikt about AIDS, on television, scrutinize the issue at every opportunity. Why are the facts re-emphasized so consistently in public?

PATRICK C. HENNESSY
Dun Laoghaire.
Chimps not protected by AIDS vaccine

AN EXPERIMENTAL AIDS vaccine given to six chimpanzees in the United States prompted the animals to develop antibodies to the virus but failed to protect them from infection.

It did not unfortunately protect the animals against infection," said Harold McClure, chief of pathology and immunology at Emory University's Yerkes Primate Centre in Atlanta.

"And that's got to be the bottom line as far as what we're looking for is concerned: a vaccine for this disease." McClure questioned a decision by Federal officials to begin human tests of experimental AIDS vaccines before the preparations had been thoroughly tested with chimpanzees, the only animals other than humans that have been successfully infected with the human AIDS virus.

"I don't understand why we need to rush into humans with a vaccine that either does not work with chimps or has not been tested with chimps," he said. "To justify vaccinating humans, we should have information that the vaccine is likely going to be protective."

The U.S. Food and Drugs Administration last week approved the first candidate vaccine for human experiments, which are expected to begin this Autumn.

The stated purpose of the tests is to determine if candidate vaccines stimulate the production of antibodies to the disease in humans.

But McClure said the significant question is whether these are the type of antibodies that produce immunity to the disease.

Scientists from Yerkes, the centre for disease control, the Southwest Foundation for Biomedical Research in San Antonio and Oncogen, a Seattle-based biotechnology company, described their experiments in a paper published this week in the British scientific journal, Nature.

It is the first scientific account of an effort to immunise chimpanzees to the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which causes AIDS.

The six vaccinated chimps were injected with the potential vaccine -- a genetically engineered form of vaccinia virus containing a section of genetic material from the AIDS virus.

Two weeks after receiving the vaccinations, the chimpanzees were given "booster" vaccinations of the same substance.

After an additional two weeks, tests showed all had low concentrations of antibodies to HIV, the researchers said.
Euthanasia 'threat' to AIDS victims

The legalisation of voluntary euthanasia could lead to a form of war between AIDS victims and the rest of society, a former president of the British Medical Association said today.

Sir John Peel, who was the Queen's obstetrician, is one of the signatories of a report by Family and Youth Concern to the BMA working party considering euthanasia. It said AIDS sufferers would be the first to suffer from pressures for voluntary euthanasia.

The disease isolated its victims. Its treatment was expensive and society was likely to become increasingly intolerant of patients as antagonism towards high-risk communities, homosexuals and drug abusers increased.

Those at risk would cease to approach the medical profession, feeling unwanted and unloved.

"It would not be surprising if this led to irresponsible behaviour upon the part of sufferers resulting in the deliberate infection of others," said Sir John and the other signatories, Mr Ambrose King, a leading venereologist until his retirement, Dr. Stanley Director, chairman, and Mrs. Valerie Riches, secretary of Family and Youth Concern.

Euthanasia could also have serious implications for family attitudes. People who are ill or very elderly can appear difficult or cantankerous. Inheritance and a wish to be free of responsibility would undoubtedly influence some relatives to persuade the individual to choose euthanasia.
AIDS robber is caught in US

NEW YORK'S most wanted bank robber, who held up 31 Manhattan banks by presenting cashiers with notes saying he was "dying of AIDS and had nothing to lose", has been arrested during another robbery.

Cyril Hodge (39), walked into a Citibank branch on Madison Avenue just before noon yesterday. He approached a cashier and said he had AIDS and would not hesitate to shoot unless the cashier handed over some money.

While walking out of the bank, with $500 to $600, he was jumped on by the bank manager and the manager's assistant, who held him until the police arrived.

Hodge, who offered little resistance, "was the most prolific robber, and had the longest pattern that we've ever had here," said Capt. Patrick Harnett of the Police Department's major case squad. Of the 32 bank robberies, 4 were unsuccessful.

Harnett said Hodge had netted about $200,000 in midtown and lower Manhattan. In 6 of them, investigators had been searching for him since February 20.

In most of the robberies, Hodge would hand in a note which read: "I'm dying of AIDS. I've got nothing to lose." In some cases he would threaten to shoot the cashier. In at least 6 robberies, Harnett said, Hodge displayed a fake gun which he had on him when arrested.

Hodge appeared not to be camera shy. His picture was recorded by security cameras in many of the banks he robbed, and except for sunglasses and a hat, he did not attempt to disguise himself.

The police said that Hodge had a previous conviction for a bank robbery in 1873 in which a bank guard was shot and wounded. He served five years of a 15-year sentence.

Police said Hodge told them after his arrest that he was spending $200 a day on injecting himself with drugs. His blood will be tested to see if it contained the AIDS virus.

Hodge was charged with "several counts of robbery in the first degree", police said, but they have not yet determined how many counts that will be.
Protecting Volunteers
In AIDS Vaccine Test

BY LAWRENCE K. ALTMAN, M.D.

Injections of the first experimental human AIDS vaccine in the United States this fall will be accompanied by what officials call "unprecedented" steps to protect the volunteers from possible discrimination.

The experimenter in New York City will study 35 volunteers aged 18 to 50 who have been seronegative for six months or more and who will be injected with a killed AIDS virus vaccine.

AIDS research is now a national priority, and the 35 volunteers will be monitored carefully. If the vaccine shows promise, the next phase of the experiments will be staged in the mid-United States, with the hopes that a vaccine can be found within the next five to 10 years.

Steps are being taken to protect the volunteers from discrimination if later tests falsely suggest virus infection.

AIDS, a disease that kills about 10,000 Americans a year, is not only a threat to people who have sex with each other, as is widely believed, but also to those who use intravenous drugs, those whose sex partners have been infected, and those whose blood is transfused.

As part of a compensatory package for the patients, the experimenter will provide the volunteers with information about the risks they face and will provide them with a $300 gift certificate for each month they are in the study.

The experimenter, Dr. Leonard J. Kassouf, chief of the Vaccine Division of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said in an interview that he was anxious to protect the volunteers from discrimination.

"We have been anxious to protect volunteers from discrimination," he said. "We have not been able to protect the volunteers from discrimination, and we have been anxious to protect them from discrimination."
Patients save up their own blood

Daily Mail Reporter

Although patients are being invited to give their own blood for operations.

The idea is that they will only donate a small amount of their own

blood. But it will be used if necessary. The patients will be given

a course of anti-coagulant drugs before they

are operated on. Their blood will then

be taken and stored in a fridge.

The procedure was pioneered by

the Western Regional Health

Authority in Burnley, Hereford,

Wrexham and Bolton.

Arranged

Doctors hope it will provide the

usual labour savings needed for

blood banking and reduce the

amount of blood lost in

operations. The system has

been tried in several

hospitals, but this is the first

time it has been tried in

Scotland.
Soviet AIDS order

The Soviet parliament decreed compulsory AIDS test for Soviet citizens and foreigners and set jail terms for those who pass on the disease.
US condom aid remains a growth industry

AMERICANS are hopelessly ambivalent about condoms. Most get frightfully upset when doctors suggest that they should be advertised on television to help prevent the spread of Aids, yet each year millions of tax dollars are spent on campaigns in distant parts of the world trying to persuade the citizens of 70 other nations to use them.

One explanation for this is that, until this week, many Americans seemed unaware that the government was the world's biggest buyer of condoms — five billion since 1968 or one for each of the world's population today. Nor did they know that the condoms were distributed free or at a

From Peter Pringle in Washington

minimal charge in underdeveloped nations in an effort to bring down birth rates.

News of this ballooning programme, run by the State Department, was brought to Americans without a hint of the customary sensitivity at breakfast time on Monday and Tuesday by the NBC television network. NBC revealed that, although the federal budget is under the chopper and funds for everything from school dinners to missiles are being withdrawn, the condom for foreigners programme, which was started 20 years ago, has doubled.

Mexico recently asked the State Department for three million more on top of the five million it had already received this year. Uganda requested six million this year from an average of 800,000 two years ago.

Some of the increased demand may be connected to the Aids crisis. It turns out that, for the Agency for International Development, or AID, the condom campaign is a new war on the street, which is the result of the aggressive advertising campaign that accompanies the scheme. The colour, shape and brand name of the US condoms are tailor-made to each country's perceived needs.

Even the best-laid marketing plans can come unstuck, of course. Mexican men were offered the condoms, which are made in Alabama, in three sizes: small, medium and "super-macho". Only the last named were taken up. The latest batch sent to Mexico were all called "Protector" and sales, at a packet of three for 15p, have gone up 300 per cent this year. The number of children in the average Mexican family has dropped by 35 per cent.

It looks like being President Reagan's only Central American policy success.
AIDS: vaccine 'years away'

A PROMINENT British scientist told yesterday's science conference in Belfast that it is too soon to say if a vaccine safe enough for widespread use can be developed to combat the AIDS virus.

Dr. Michael Hall told the annual conference of the British Association for the Advancement of Science that the prospects for such a vaccine "look some years away."

"In the meantime, mankind will have to learn to live with herpes and AIDS and hope that the sustained campaign against anti-social behaviour patterns, coupled with education, preventative measures and counselling, can contain the alarming increase in new patients and carriers," Dr. Hall said.

But, Dr. Hall, a researcher with the Roche drug company warned that the ultimate goal would be the use of genetic engineering to cut out the AIDS virus from the human cells of infected carriers. "If this ever proves possible, then the implications will raise serious ethical and moral questions perhaps as difficult to answer as those relating to AIDS itself."

Meanwhile, the Soviet Parliament has decreed compulsory AIDS testing of Soviet citizens and foreigners and set jail terms -- from five to eight years -- for people who knowingly pass on the deadly virus, the news agency said yesterday.
Concert to fight Aids

The Radiators from Space, one of the top punk bands of the seventies, will perform at an Aids benefit concert organised by Gay Health Action in Dublin on September 13.

Gay Health Action is planning a major "Aid to Fight AIDS Week" for next January.
AIDS tests ordered

THE Soviet Union yesterday ordered compulsory testing of citizens and foreigners suspected of carrying AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) and threatened up to eight years' imprisonment for knowingly infecting someone else.

The decree by the Supreme Soviet (Parliament) follows a steady increase in the number of cases reported in the country.

"The citizens of the USSR, as well as foreign citizens and stateless persons living or staying in the territory of the USSR, may be bound to take a medical test for the AIDS virus," the decree said.

Suspects who refuse to have a test can be brought to clinics by health authorities aided by police, and the decree carried by the Tass news agency. Foreigners can be expelled from the country if they refuse to take the test, it said.

"Deliberate exposure of another person to the danger of being infected with AIDS shall be punished with up to five years in prison," the decree warned. "The infection of another person with AIDS by a person aware of having AIDS shall be punished by up to eight years in prison."

An official report last week said 130 cases of AIDS had been confirmed in the Soviet Union, although only 19 were Soviet citizens. Three people have died from AIDS, all of them foreigners. — (AFP, UPI).

An anonymous bomb threat forced the evacuation of an elementary school in Arcadia, Florida, yesterday as three homosexual brothers infected with the AIDS virus arrived to begin school. After a 40-minute search, classes were resumed. — (AP)
Aids test for all in Russia

Moscow (Reuters) – The Supreme Soviet, the country’s Parliament, has decreed compulsory Aids testing of Soviet citizens and foreigners and set jail terms for people who knowingly pass on the deadly virus. Tass said yesterday.

The decree said: “Soviet citizens, as well as foreign citizens and stateless persons living or staying on the territory of the Soviet Union, may be bound to take a medical test for the AIDS virus.”

Those who dodged the test could be brought to hospitals, if necessary with the help of the police, if there were grounds for believing they were infected with AIDS, the decree said. Foreigners who dodged the test could be expelled.

The decree ordered prison terms of five years for people who deliberately exposed others to the risk of infection from AIDS and eight years for people who passed on the disease. Similar penalties apply to people who knowingly transmit venereal diseases.

The Soviet Union at first treated AIDS as a problem of the decadent West but has recently launched research programmes into the disease. The official media have also started to give more factual information about it.

The exact number of Soviet victims is unclear. In March, Soviet doctors said 32 cases had been registered, all but two of them affecting foreigners who were deported. But in June, the press wrote about a Soviet homosexual who had returned from a foreign trip with AIDS and who had unwittingly infected at least six other people.

Academician Valentin Golovin said then that although the situation in the Soviet Union, where homosexuality is illegal, was not as bad as in the West, the AIDS problem had taken a worrying turn. Before yesterday’s announcement the media had been urging people to have voluntary tests.
Aids and herpes

Search for cure could use ‘super race’ techniques

The search for a cure for Aids, herpes and other viral diseases could lead to genetic manipulation of the type that scientists would employ to produce a “super race” of people, a drug company expert told the British Association meeting in Belfast yesterday.

The goal of selecting and removing specific human genes linked to the diseases in infected individuals would raise serious ethical and moral questions “perhaps as difficult to answer as those relating to Aids itself”, Dr Michael Hall said.

“It would mean that we could manipulate at will the human genetic pool, produce super races, modify ethnic traits, excise socially unacceptable habits – in fact produce people to order.”

Although such advances could help to eliminate some inherited diseases, Dr Hall added: “The potential for abuse is real and there must be many who hope that such techniques are never developed.”

Dr Hall, head of the chemotherapy division of the Roche Products pharmaceutical company, at Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, was talking on the prospects for effective drugs against Aids, herpes and other diseases caused by viruses.

He said this “brave new world” might never happen, but it could result from the rapid development of genetic engineering techniques. More realistically, the advances were likely to lead to more effective drugs against Aids.

“Ten or 15 years ago, these techniques were unavailable and we would have been almost helpless in the face of the advance of Aids. At least we can now see and understand the enemy, as the first step in its defeat.”

Among the many thousands of viruses which cause several hundred human diseases the Aids-causing human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) was probably now the best understood only five years after it was first identified, Dr Hall said.

The catalyst for this “explosive growth of knowledge” was the sociological and economic concern about the epidemic spread of the disease.

Advances in genetic engineering had given greater insights into viral molecular biology than could have been imagined 10 years ago. The result was that anti-viral drug research had been catapulted from “a relatively minor and somewhat leisurely pursuit”, to the top priority of many drug companies and research institutes around the world.

“In certain respects progress has been spectacular.”

However, the herpes and Aids viruses were among the most complex and sophisticated, posing huge problems for drug development. They were able to invade the body’s nervous system and lie dormant for years if not for the lifetime of the infected individual. Both could hide within human cells, inducing disease from entrenched positions.

Drugs developed to treat herpes in the past 10 years had been unsuccessful either because of their unexpected toxicity or their lack of activity. In addition the arrival of the Aids epidemic had diverted a very significant part of the scientific effort away from herpes drug development, Dr Hall said.

While there was “very real hope” of producing drugs to control the symptoms of herpes and Aids infection by preventing or depressing the rate of virus multiplication in the body, the latency of the viruses was still the biggest problem, he said.

The search for a herpes vaccine had failed in spite of 66 years of research. The Aids virus was presenting “unexpectedly difficult problems”, he said. “It is too soon to say if an HIV vaccine safe enough for widespread use can be developed but the prospects look some years away.”

Meanwhile, mankind would have to learn to live with Aids and herpes in the hope that public education and prevention measures would contain the “alarming increase” in new patients and carriers.

In the case of Aids, drugs now being developed would reduce the infectiousness of those people with the disease and hence its spread. “It is here that the efforts of chemists are truly at the leading edge in the battle for health, not just in Britain but in the world as a whole”, Dr Hall said.
State Lawmakers Take Lead
In AIDS-Related Legislation

By JON DAVIES
Staff writer of The Wall Street Journal

WASHINGTON — State lawmakers in the U.S. capital wrestled with the question of what to do about AIDS, most of the concrete action so far has been taking place elsewhere — in the state capitals.

AIDS-related bills are flooding state legislatures. During the height of the state legislative season, five to 10 AIDS-related measures were being introduced every day, according to Richard Merritt, director of the American Legislative Exchange Council.

In all, some 500 such measures have been introduced in legislatures this year.

The largest portion of these bills — about 76% — have to do with mandatory testing, principally of marriage-license applicants, for AIDS, or acquired immune deficiency syndrome. "Every state legislature, if they haven't already, is going to be faced with a mandatory testing bill or a bill to require mandatory testing in some way," says Woodrow Myers, Indiana's health commissioner and president of the National Association of State and Territorial Health Officials.

In addition, however, lawmakers are grappling with questions such as health care costs, confidentiality and discrimination.

The question of whose rights to confidentiality has been sent to the AIDS debate in state capitals just as it has been in Washington. It focuses on a couple of political problems: "the stigma of secrecy versus the right of individuals," says Philip Lee, director of the Institute for Health Policy Studies at the University of California, San Francisco. Dr. Lee says the "political debate" has contributed to the flood of state AIDS bills, with the political right in a state source of legislation.

Greater Number of People

In some ways, the AIDS debate has turned into a constitutional debate on its own. On most issues, the political right has tended to emphasize individual rights; in this one, though, many conservatives are pushing measures that they argue will protect the greater good of people who aren't infected.

In the Oregon State Senate, Rep. Patsy Pullen, a conservative Republican, has sponsored a bill that would bar public health officials from asking individuals if they have AIDS. The bill, which was signed by the governor, is expected to go to the courts next month.

Among other things, the measure would require public health officials to ask individuals if they have AIDS, to provide them with information about the disease, and to notify the Department of Health and Human Services when individuals are found to be infected. The bill has been referred to a federal court, where it is expected to go.

One particularly controversial bill made by the state's Department of Health and Human Services, which has been opposed by the lawmakers, is a measure that would allow individuals to refuse to be tested for AIDS. The bill is expected to go to the courts next month.

The kind of bills that have been passed in Illinois really run counter to the general consensus as far as the states are concerned, that voluntary cooperation is really the way to go," says Mr. Merritt, who notes that a federal official at the federal level who has said that voluntary cooperation is the way to go."