

UPDATE

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**IV INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AIDS
JUNE 12-16, 1988, STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN**

TITLE Rate of Heterosexual HIV Transmission and Associated Risk with HIV-Antigen

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OF PRESENTATION**

STOCKHOLM--Risk of transmitting AIDS to a sexual partner appears to increase as the AIDS-infected person progresses toward developing full-blown AIDS, according to findings reported today by scientists from the U.S. National Cancer Institute (NCI) and collaborating research centers.

NCI's James Goedert, M.D., and colleagues based their findings on data from a study of 129 U.S. male hemophiliacs infected with the AIDS virus and their sexual partners. Hemophiliacs were at increased risk of becoming infected with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), the cause of AIDS, through the blood products they received for their disease. The risk has been markedly reduced, however, since routine screening tests for HIV-infected blood have become available.

(more)

Speaking at the 4th International Conference on AIDS in Stockholm, Dr. Goedert said three factors were strongly associated with increased risk of male-to-female sexual transmission: severe depletion of T cells--a type of white blood cell that is a chief target of HIV; detectable HIV in the blood; and being diagnosed with AIDS.

Of the 129 female partners, 14 percent (18) of them became infected with HIV. Of hemophiliacs who had T4 cell counts in the lowest range (under 120), 38 percent (6) transmitted the virus to their female sexual partners. This compared to a transmission rate of only 5 to 12 percent among hemophiliacs with higher T4 counts.

Forty-one percent (7) of the 17 antibody-positive men who had detectable HIV antigen in their blood transmitted the virus to their female partners, compared to nine percent (8) of 85 antibody-positive men who tested negative for the antigen. (An antigen test detects a portion of the virus itself.)

During the first three years of sexual relations with an HIV-infected hemophiliac, only about one percent of the women became infected per year. The risk dramatically increased with longer relationships, however, with 10 to 20 percent of the women becoming infected per year after the fifth year.

Types and frequency of sexual practices were relatively unimportant risk factors. With regard to contraceptive practices, only one (3 percent) of the 30 women were infected in couples who "always" used condoms compared with 2 (7 percent) of 30 women in couples who "never" used condoms. Seven (21 percent) of the women were infected in couples who "sometimes" or "usually" used condoms, indicating that irregular use of condoms was not helpful.

UPDATE

The study was conducted by scientists at NCI, Bethesda, Md., in collaboration with scientists from eight U.S. regional hemophilic centers.



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AIDS
JUNE 11-15, 1985, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

TITLE: Risk of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome and Associated Risk with HIV Infection

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