

## **AIDS Knowledge and Attitudes for September 1987**

### **Provisional Data From the National Health Interview Survey**

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#### **Introduction**

The National Center for Health Statistics has introduced a special set of supplemental questions on the adult population's knowledge and attitudes about acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) in the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS). This report presents provisional findings for September, the second month of data collection with the AIDS questionnaire. Data for August 1987 have been published in NCHS *Advance Data From Vital and Health Statistics*, No. 146.

The AIDS questionnaire was designed to provide baseline estimates of public knowledge and attitudes about AIDS transmission and prevention of AIDS virus infection and to measure changes in knowledge and attitudes over time. The data also were needed as input for the planning and development of AIDS educational campaigns and for evaluation of major educational efforts.

The AIDS questionnaire was developed by the National Center for Health Statistics and interagency working groups established by the Information, Education and Risk Factor Reduction Subcommittee of the Public Health Service Executive Task Force on AIDS. The working groups included representatives from the Centers for Disease Control; the National Institutes of Health; the Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration; and the Health Resources and Services Administration.

The questionnaire includes items on self-assessment of knowledge about AIDS; sources of information about AIDS; knowledge about AIDS and AIDS-related risk factors, modes of transmission, and blood tests for the AIDS virus; plans to take such a test; recent experience with blood donation; self-assessment of chances of getting AIDS; personal knowledge of people with AIDS or the

AIDS virus; and finally, willingness of respondents to take part in a proposed national seroprevalence study.

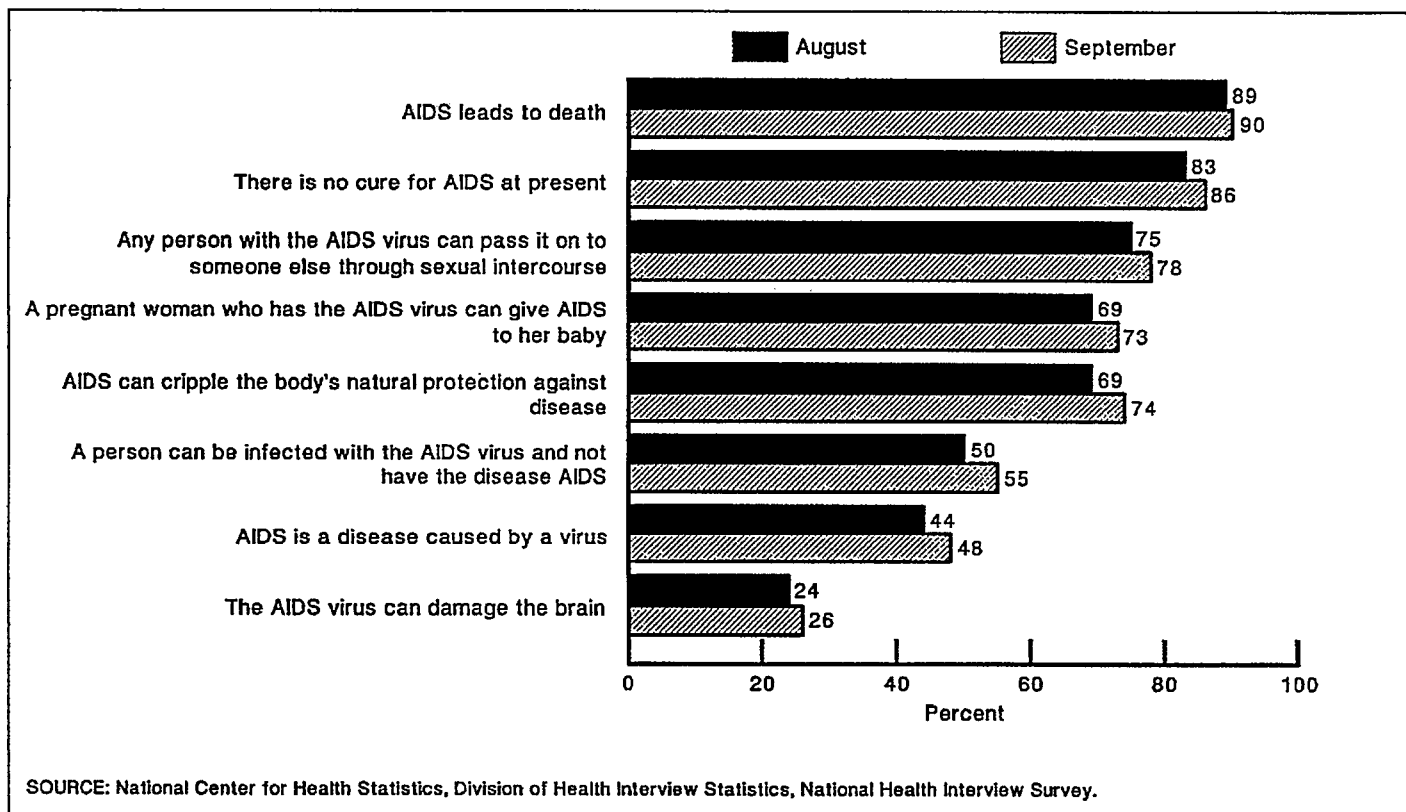
This report presents provisional data for all AIDS questionnaire items. Table 1 displays percent distributions of persons 18 years of age and over by response categories according to age, sex, race, and marital status. In most cases, the actual question asked of the respondent is reproduced verbatim in table 1, along with the response categories. In a few cases, questions or response categories have been rephrased or combined. Refusals and other nonresponses are excluded from the denominator in the calculation of estimates, but responses of "don't know" are included.

#### **Selected findings**

There are signs that the U.S. public's knowledge about AIDS increased slightly between August and September 1987, especially in the areas of general information concerning the characteristics of the disease and its modes of transmission. The following highlights describe the September data, noting any topic areas where the results are significantly different from those obtained in August.

*Awareness of AIDS*—Virtually everyone (more than 99 percent) has heard of AIDS. More than three-fourths (77 percent) of adults last saw, heard, or read something about AIDS within 3 days of the NHIS interview, an increase from 74 percent in August.

*Self-perceived knowledge*—Twenty percent of adults 18 years of age and over feel that they know a lot about AIDS compared to most people; 43 percent feel they know some; 28 percent feel they know a little; and 9 percent feel they know nothing about AIDS. As was the case in August, adults 50 years and over are more likely than younger



**Figure 1. Provisional estimates of percent of adults 18 years of age and over who think selected statements about AIDS are definitely true: United States, August and September, 1987**

adults to state that they know nothing about AIDS and less likely to think that they know a lot. Black individuals are more than twice as likely as white individuals to state that they know nothing about AIDS (20 percent compared to 8 percent).

*General knowledge*—Figure 1 shows the percents of adults answering “definitely true” to selected knowledge questions. For a number of these questions, there were small but statistically significant increases between August and September in the proportions of adults answering correctly. The majority of respondents (90 percent) continue to be certain that AIDS leads to death. Increased proportions think it is definitely true that there is no cure for AIDS at present (86 percent compared to 83 percent in August), that anyone with the AIDS virus can transmit it to other individuals through sexual intercourse (78 percent, up from 75 percent in August), and that a pregnant woman can transmit AIDS to her baby (73 percent, up from 69 percent). There also were increases between August and September in the percent of adults who think it is definitely true that AIDS can cripple the body’s natural protection against disease (74 percent compared to 69 percent), that a person can be infected with the AIDS virus and not have the disease AIDS (55 versus 50 percent), and that AIDS is caused by a virus (48 versus 44 percent). Another indication of improved public knowledge lies in the increased proportions of adults who think it is definitely false that AIDS is especially common in older people (69 percent in September compared to 65 percent in August), that you can tell if a person has AIDS just by looking at them (71

compared to 65 percent), and that there is a vaccine to prevent the AIDS virus (69 percent compared to 65 percent).

Despite these areas of improvement, there continues to be a great deal of uncertainty about the causes of AIDS and about the relationship between the AIDS virus and the disease AIDS. For the most part, the lowest levels of general knowledge are found among adults 50 years of age and over, confirming their own self-assessment that they know relatively little about the disease.

*Transmission of the AIDS virus*—Most Americans are aware of the ways in which the AIDS virus is most likely to be transmitted. More than 9 out of 10 adults say it is very likely that a person will get AIDS from having sex with a person who has AIDS (94 percent) or from sharing needles for drug use with someone who has AIDS (93 percent). The level of misinformation about modes of transmission, particularly from casual contact, continues to be high; however, there is some evidence of improvement in this area. Donating blood is still considered a likely way of getting the AIDS virus by one-fourth (26 percent) of adults, but the percent who think it is definitely not possible to transmit the virus by blood donation has increased from 18 to 21 percent. There also have been increases in the proportions of adults who think it is impossible to transmit the virus by working near someone with AIDS (21 percent in September compared to 18 percent in August), by shaking hands with or touching someone with AIDS (26 compared to 22 percent), by kissing on the cheek someone with AIDS (23 compared to 19 percent), and by attending

school with a child who has AIDS (24 compared to 20 percent).

Black adults continue to be more likely than white adults to perceive a threat of AIDS virus infection from many sources of casual contact. There are few differences by age, sex, and marital status in knowledge or misinformation about the transmission of AIDS.

*Blood test for the AIDS virus*—A number of questions were asked about blood tests for the AIDS virus. Overall, 72 percent of adults have heard of the blood test, about the same as in August (70 percent). Persons 30-49 years of age are most likely (82 percent) and persons 50 years of age and over least likely (57 percent) to have heard of the test. Although there is widespread awareness that a blood test for the AIDS virus is available, there appears to be some misunderstanding about the purpose of the test. Forty percent of adults (56 percent of those who have heard of the test) erroneously believe that the blood test results tell whether a person has the disease AIDS.

As was the case in August, 7 percent of respondents report having had their blood tested for the AIDS virus, including 2 percent who voluntarily said that they were tested because of a blood donation or transfusion. (On the other hand, about 12 percent report having given blood since January 1985, the approximate date when routine testing of donated blood began.) These provisional data indicate that adults under age 30 are almost four times as likely to have had the AIDS blood test as persons 50 years of age and over. In addition, 11 percent of all adults have thought about having the AIDS test, and 5 percent say they plan to be tested in the next 12 months. Thirteen percent of Americans age 18 years and over know someone who has had the AIDS blood test.

*Risk of getting AIDS*—Most adults believe that they (and the people that they know) are at little or no risk of AIDS infection. Nine in 10 feel that there is no chance (60 percent) or a low chance (31 percent) of getting AIDS themselves. More than 6 in 10 say that the chance of someone they know getting AIDS is low (38 percent, up from 34 percent in August) or nonexistent (26 percent). Seven percent of adults report personally knowing someone with the AIDS virus.

*AIDS prevention*—Almost 9 out of 10 Americans realize that both celibacy and restricting sexual activity to a monogamous relationship with a person who does not have the AIDS virus are very effective ways to avoid infection with the virus. One-third (33 percent) think that using condoms is a very effective way to avoid the virus, and an additional 49 percent consider this method somewhat effective. Fifty-nine percent of the adults in the United States think that using a diaphragm is not an effective way to avoid getting the AIDS virus, an increase over the August estimate of 56 percent. An equal proportion (59 percent compared to 54 percent in August) feel that using spermicides is ineffective in AIDS prevention.

*AIDS discussion and education*—Two-thirds of adults (68 percent) have discussed AIDS with friends or relatives. Persons age 50 and over are the least likely to have done so. Of adults with children between the ages of 10 and 17, 61 percent have talked with their children about AIDS (14 percent of all adults). Forty-two percent of those with children in this age range report that their children have received instruction about AIDS at school, an increase over the August estimate of 35 percent.

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### Symbols

- Quantity zero
  - 0 Quantity more than zero but less than 0.5
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**Table 1. Provisional estimates of the percent of persons 18 years of age and over with selected AIDS knowledge and attitudes from the 1987 National Health Interview Survey, by selected characteristics: United States, September 1987**

[Data are based on household interviews of the civilian noninstitutionalized population. The survey design, general qualifications, and information on the reliability of the estimates are given in technical notes]

AIDS knowledge or attitude	Total	Age			Sex		Race		Marital status		
		18-29 years	30-49 years	50 years and over	Male	Female	White	Black	Married	Unmarried	
		Percent distribution <sup>1</sup>									
Total . . . . .	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
1. Have you ever heard of AIDS? When was the last time you saw, heard, or read something about AIDS?											
0-3 days ago . . . . .	77	69	79	81	78	76	79	71	79	73	
4-7 days ago . . . . .	13	16	13	10	12	13	13	15	13	13	
8-14 days ago . . . . .	3	4	3	2	2	3	2	4	3	3	
15-31 days ago . . . . .	3	5	3	2	3	3	3	4	2	4	
More than 31 days ago . . . . .	2	3	1	1	2	2	1	3	1	3	
Never heard of AIDS . . . . .	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	
Don't know . . . . .	3	2	2	4	2	3	2	3	2	4	
2. Compared to most people, how much would you say you know about AIDS?											
A lot . . . . .	20	22	26	13	23	18	21	13	20	21	
Some . . . . .	43	49	47	33	40	45	43	37	44	40	
Little . . . . .	28	25	23	35	27	28	27	30	28	28	
Nothing . . . . .	9	4	4	19	10	9	8	20	8	11	
Don't know . . . . .	0	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
3a. AIDS is a disease caused by a virus.											
Definitely true . . . . .	48	58	53	34	53	44	48	49	46	52	
Probably true . . . . .	28	27	29	27	26	29	28	22	29	25	
Probably false . . . . .	4	3	2	5	3	4	4	2	4	3	
Definitely false . . . . .	4	3	4	6	4	5	4	6	5	3	
Don't know . . . . .	17	9	12	28	15	18	16	21	17	17	
3b. AIDS can cripple the body's natural protection against disease.											
Definitely true . . . . .	74	78	81	63	77	72	76	60	76	71	
Probably true . . . . .	15	14	12	20	14	16	15	17	14	17	
Probably false . . . . .	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	
Definitely false . . . . .	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	
Don't know . . . . .	9	5	5	15	8	9	7	19	8	9	
3c. AIDS is especially common in older people.											
Definitely true . . . . .	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	3	0	1	
Probably true . . . . .	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	2	
Probably false . . . . .	21	25	18	21	20	22	21	19	20	24	
Definitely false . . . . .	69	65	75	64	69	69	70	59	72	63	
Don't know . . . . .	9	7	6	13	9	8	7	16	8	11	
3d. The AIDS virus can damage the brain.											
Definitely true . . . . .	26	23	25	30	27	26	26	30	27	26	
Probably true . . . . .	32	33	31	34	32	33	32	31	32	34	
Probably false . . . . .	8	9	10	5	9	7	8	6	8	8	
Definitely false . . . . .	6	7	9	2	7	5	6	4	6	5	
Don't know . . . . .	27	27	25	30	26	28	27	29	28	26	
3e. AIDS usually leads to heart disease.											
Definitely true . . . . .	7	6	6	9	7	7	7	10	7	7	
Probably true . . . . .	22	20	21	24	20	23	21	27	21	22	
Probably false . . . . .	18	21	22	12	21	16	19	13	18	18	
Definitely false . . . . .	14	16	18	8	15	13	14	11	14	13	
Don't know . . . . .	39	37	34	48	36	42	40	39	39	40	
3f. AIDS leads to death.											
Definitely true . . . . .	90	92	91	89	88	92	91	89	90	91	
Probably true . . . . .	8	7	7	8	9	6	8	7	8	7	
Probably false . . . . .	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	
Definitely false . . . . .	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Don't know . . . . .	2	0	1	3	2	1	1	3	1	2	
4a. Where do you get most of your information about AIDS? <sup>2</sup>											
Television . . . . .	82	81	80	86	82	83	82	86	83	81	
Newspapers . . . . .	60	46	63	68	65	56	63	41	65	52	
Magazines . . . . .	28	28	31	25	22	33	29	19	28	27	
Radio . . . . .	8	6	9	9	10	6	8	8	9	6	
Relatives and friends . . . . .	7	8	8	4	7	6	7	4	6	8	
Brochures/fliers/pamphlets . . . . .	7	8	8	5	7	7	6	12	7	8	
Doctor/HMO/clinic . . . . .	5	5	7	4	5	6	5	9	5	7	
Other . . . . .	15	20	18	8	17	14	15	15	15	17	
Don't know . . . . .	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	
4b. Of the sources you just told me, from which one do you get the most information?											
Television . . . . .	56	60	51	58	55	57	55	66	56	55	
Newspapers . . . . .	21	14	21	26	23	18	22	10	22	18	
Magazines . . . . .	9	9	11	7	7	11	9	6	9	9	
Brochures/fliers/pamphlets . . . . .	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
Doctor/HMO/clinic . . . . .	2	2	3	1	2	2	2	5	2	3	
Other . . . . .	10	13	12	5	11	9	9	10	9	11	
Don't know . . . . .	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	

See footnotes at end of table.

**Table 1. Provisional estimates of the percent of persons 18 years of age and over with selected AIDS knowledge and attitudes from the 1987 National Health Interview Survey, by selected characteristics: United States, September 1987—Con.**

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AIDS knowledge or attitude	Total	Age			Sex		Race		Marital status	
		18-29 years	30-49 years	50 years and over	Male	Female	White	Black	Married	Unmarried
5a. If you wanted more specific information about AIDS, where would you get it? <sup>2</sup>					Percent distribution <sup>1</sup>					
Doctor/HMO/clinic . . . . .	57	57	60	55	55	60	58	50	60	53
Public health department . . . . .	17	14	19	17	18	16	17	15	17	16
Library . . . . .	12	17	14	6	11	13	12	13	13	12
AIDS hot line . . . . .	8	10	8	5	7	8	8	8	6	10
Other . . . . .	26	28	29	21	28	24	25	30	25	28
Don't know . . . . .	12	10	8	19	13	12	12	12	12	13
5b. Which one source would you most likely use?										
Doctor/HMO/clinic . . . . .	46	46	46	48	44	48	47	42	48	43
Public health department . . . . .	12	10	13	13	14	11	13	10	12	12
Library . . . . .	8	12	10	4	7	9	8	10	8	8
AIDS hot line . . . . .	6	7	6	4	5	6	6	7	5	8
Other . . . . .	15	15	16	13	17	13	14	18	14	15
Don't know . . . . .	13	10	9	19	13	12	12	13	12	14
6a. A person can be infected with the AIDS virus and not have the disease AIDS.										
Definitely true . . . . .	55	54	63	45	53	56	57	40	57	50
Probably true . . . . .	25	23	23	27	27	23	25	24	24	25
Probably false . . . . .	3	5	3	3	4	3	3	7	3	4
Definitely false . . . . .	4	7	3	2	4	4	3	8	3	5
Don't know . . . . .	14	11	8	22	13	14	12	21	13	15
6b. You can tell if people have the AIDS virus just by looking at them.										
Definitely true . . . . .	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Probably true . . . . .	4	5	2	5	3	5	4	5	3	5
Probably false . . . . .	15	13	15	17	16	15	15	16	15	15
Definitely false . . . . .	71	75	75	61	71	70	72	65	72	67
Don't know . . . . .	10	6	6	16	9	10	9	14	8	12
6c. Any person with the AIDS virus can pass it on to someone else during sexual intercourse.										
Definitely true . . . . .	78	81	79	75	76	80	78	75	79	77
Probably true . . . . .	17	15	17	18	19	15	17	15	17	17
Probably false . . . . .	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
Definitely false . . . . .	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	2	0	1
Don't know . . . . .	4	3	3	7	4	4	3	8	4	5
6d. A pregnant woman who has the AIDS virus can give AIDS to her baby.										
Definitely true . . . . .	73	76	77	67	69	77	73	73	74	71
Probably true . . . . .	19	18	16	24	23	16	20	16	18	21
Probably false . . . . .	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Definitely false . . . . .	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Don't know . . . . .	7	6	6	9	8	6	7	9	7	7
6e. There is a vaccine available to the public that protects a person from getting the AIDS virus.										
Definitely true . . . . .	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1
Probably true . . . . .	3	4	3	3	3	3	2	9	3	4
Probably false . . . . .	11	14	9	10	11	11	10	13	10	12
Definitely false . . . . .	69	70	77	60	72	67	72	51	71	66
Don't know . . . . .	15	12	10	25	13	18	14	25	15	16
6f. There is no cure for AIDS at present.										
Definitely true . . . . .	86	86	88	83	85	86	87	76	87	84
Probably true . . . . .	8	7	7	10	9	8	8	11	7	9
Probably false . . . . .	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Definitely false . . . . .	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	4	1	2
Don't know . . . . .	4	3	3	5	4	4	3	8	4	4
7. How likely do you think it is that a person will get the AIDS virus from—										
7a. Receiving a blood transfusion?										
Very likely . . . . .	36	36	31	40	33	38	32	54	34	38
Somewhat likely . . . . .	32	31	32	33	30	33	33	29	32	31
Somewhat unlikely . . . . .	13	15	15	8	13	12	14	5	13	12
Very unlikely . . . . .	15	15	18	11	19	11	17	4	16	13
Definitely not possible . . . . .	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1
Don't know . . . . .	4	3	3	7	4	4	4	7	4	4
7b. Donating or giving blood?										
Very likely . . . . .	10	10	9	11	10	10	8	24	9	11
Somewhat likely . . . . .	16	19	13	17	16	16	15	23	15	17
Somewhat unlikely . . . . .	13	14	11	13	13	13	13	13	12	14
Very unlikely . . . . .	34	35	38	30	35	33	36	21	36	31
Definitely not possible . . . . .	21	19	26	19	21	21	23	10	22	20
Don't know . . . . .	6	3	3	11	5	7	5	9	5	7

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<i>AIDS knowledge or attitude</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Age</i>			<i>Sex</i>		<i>Race</i>		<i>Marital status</i>	
		<i>18-29 years</i>	<i>30-49 years</i>	<i>50 years and over</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>Unmarried</i>
Percent distribution <sup>1</sup>										
7c. Living near a hospital or home for AIDS patients?										
Very likely . . . . .	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	3	1	2
Somewhat likely . . . . .	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	7	5	5
Somewhat unlikely . . . . .	10	11	10	10	11	9	10	15	10	11
Very unlikely . . . . .	40	44	41	37	43	38	41	40	41	40
Definitely not possible . . . . .	36	34	38	36	33	39	38	25	37	35
Don't know . . . . .	7	4	5	11	6	7	6	10	7	7
7d. Working near someone with AIDS?										
Very likely . . . . .	3	3	3	4	3	4	3	7	3	3
Somewhat likely . . . . .	15	15	15	16	15	15	15	18	15	16
Somewhat unlikely . . . . .	16	17	16	13	17	15	15	15	16	14
Very unlikely . . . . .	36	38	38	33	39	34	37	31	37	36
Definitely not possible . . . . .	21	22	21	20	18	23	22	16	20	22
Don't know . . . . .	9	5	6	14	7	10	8	13	9	9
7e. Eating in a restaurant where the cook has AIDS?										
Very likely . . . . .	10	11	10	10	10	11	9	19	10	12
Somewhat likely . . . . .	26	26	24	28	27	25	27	20	27	24
Somewhat unlikely . . . . .	16	18	16	13	16	15	16	9	15	16
Very unlikely . . . . .	26	25	29	22	26	25	26	23	26	24
Definitely not possible . . . . .	11	12	12	10	10	12	11	10	11	11
Don't know . . . . .	11	8	9	16	11	12	10	20	11	12
7f. Kissing—with exchange of saliva—a person who has AIDS?										
Very likely . . . . .	35	36	33	36	36	34	34	45	35	35
Somewhat likely . . . . .	34	34	34	35	34	35	35	28	35	34
Somewhat unlikely . . . . .	10	11	12	7	12	9	10	8	9	11
Very unlikely . . . . .	9	10	11	7	9	9	9	6	9	8
Definitely not possible . . . . .	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Don't know . . . . .	9	7	8	13	8	11	9	10	9	9
7g. Shaking hands with or touching someone who has AIDS?										
Very likely . . . . .	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	4	2	2
Somewhat likely . . . . .	11	11	11	11	12	10	11	14	11	11
Somewhat unlikely . . . . .	17	18	16	18	18	16	17	18	17	17
Very unlikely . . . . .	38	39	41	33	39	37	38	32	39	34
Definitely not possible . . . . .	26	27	27	23	24	27	26	20	25	28
Don't know . . . . .	6	4	4	11	5	7	6	11	6	8
7h. Sharing plates, forks, or glasses with someone who has AIDS?										
Very likely . . . . .	15	15	14	15	14	15	14	23	15	15
Somewhat likely . . . . .	32	33	31	33	33	31	32	30	33	31
Somewhat unlikely . . . . .	14	16	15	12	15	14	15	11	14	15
Very unlikely . . . . .	19	17	23	17	20	19	20	13	20	19
Definitely not possible . . . . .	10	10	11	9	8	11	10	8	10	10
Don't know . . . . .	10	8	7	14	9	10	9	14	9	10
7i. Using public toilets?										
Very likely . . . . .	9	11	7	11	7	11	8	17	9	10
Somewhat likely . . . . .	22	22	20	25	22	22	22	26	22	22
Somewhat unlikely . . . . .	16	18	17	12	17	15	16	12	15	16
Very unlikely . . . . .	27	24	32	23	30	24	28	20	28	24
Definitely not possible . . . . .	16	18	17	13	15	17	16	12	16	16
Don't know . . . . .	10	7	8	15	8	12	9	14	10	11
7j. Sharing needles for drug use with someone who has AIDS?										
Very likely . . . . .	93	95	94	89	92	93	93	87	93	93
Somewhat likely . . . . .	5	4	4	6	5	4	4	6	5	5
Somewhat unlikely . . . . .	0	0	—	0	—	0	0	—	0	0
Very unlikely . . . . .	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Definitely not possible . . . . .	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Don't know . . . . .	2	1	1	4	2	2	2	5	2	2
7k. Kissing on the cheek a person who has AIDS?										
Very likely . . . . .	4	3	4	5	4	4	3	9	4	3
Somewhat likely . . . . .	14	16	12	15	16	13	14	20	14	15
Somewhat unlikely . . . . .	19	21	20	17	21	18	19	19	19	21
Very unlikely . . . . .	33	32	35	31	34	32	34	24	34	29
Definitely not possible . . . . .	23	25	25	19	21	25	23	16	22	24
Don't know . . . . .	7	4	5	13	6	9	6	12	7	7
7l. Being coughed or sneezed on by someone who has AIDS?										
Very likely . . . . .	11	11	11	12	11	12	11	18	11	12
Somewhat likely . . . . .	29	29	24	34	30	28	29	27	29	29
Somewhat unlikely . . . . .	17	17	19	14	19	15	17	15	17	16
Very unlikely . . . . .	22	23	25	17	23	21	23	17	23	21
Definitely not possible . . . . .	10	11	11	8	9	11	10	9	9	11
Don't know . . . . .	12	9	9	16	10	13	11	15	12	11

See footnotes at end of table.

**Table 1. Provisional estimates of the percent of persons 18 years of age and over with selected AIDS knowledge and attitudes from the 1987 National Health Interview Survey, by selected characteristics: United States, September 1987—Con.**

[Data are based on household interviews of the civilian noninstitutionalized population. The survey design, general qualifications, and information on the reliability of the estimates are given in technical notes]

AIDS knowledge or attitude	Total	Age			Sex		Race		Marital status	
		18-29 years	30-49 years	50 years and over	Male	Female	White	Black	Married	Unmarried
Percent distribution <sup>1</sup>										
7m. Attending school with a child who has AIDS?										
Very likely . . . . .	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	5	2	3
Somewhat likely . . . . .	12	12	12	12	13	11	11	15	12	12
Somewhat unlikely . . . . .	17	17	18	15	17	17	16	17	17	16
Very unlikely . . . . .	36	37	38	33	39	34	38	30	37	35
Definitely not possible . . . . .	24	26	24	22	22	26	25	18	23	26
Don't know . . . . .	9	6	6	14	8	10	8	15	9	9
7n. Mosquitoes or other insects?										
Very likely . . . . .	10	13	9	9	11	9	9	18	9	12
Somewhat likely . . . . .	25	27	25	24	26	24	24	30	26	24
Somewhat unlikely . . . . .	12	15	13	9	13	12	12	11	12	12
Very unlikely . . . . .	21	20	22	18	22	19	22	11	21	19
Definitely not possible . . . . .	12	10	12	12	8	14	12	8	12	11
Don't know . . . . .	21	15	18	28	19	22	21	22	20	22
7o. Pets or animals?										
Very likely . . . . .	3	4	3	3	3	3	2	8	2	4
Somewhat likely . . . . .	10	13	8	11	11	9	10	14	11	10
Somewhat unlikely . . . . .	11	14	13	7	13	9	11	12	11	12
Very unlikely . . . . .	30	31	33	25	31	29	31	21	32	26
Definitely not possible . . . . .	23	21	26	23	21	26	24	17	24	22
Don't know . . . . .	22	18	18	31	21	24	21	27	20	26
7p. Having sex with a person who has AIDS?										
Very likely . . . . .	94	96	93	92	92	95	94	92	94	94
Somewhat likely . . . . .	4	3	5	3	5	3	4	3	4	4
Somewhat unlikely . . . . .	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	—	0	0
Very unlikely . . . . .	0	—	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Definitely not possible . . . . .	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0	0
Don't know . . . . .	2	1	1	4	2	2	1	5	2	2
8. Have you ever heard of a blood test for infection with the AIDS virus?										
Yes . . . . .	72	77	82	57	73	72	73	61	73	70
No . . . . .	25	21	16	38	24	25	24	35	24	27
Don't know . . . . .	3	2	2	5	3	3	3	5	3	3
9. Does this test tell whether a person has the disease AIDS?										
Yes . . . . .	40	44	43	33	40	40	40	39	40	40
No . . . . .	22	23	29	14	23	21	23	12	24	19
Don't know . . . . .	10	10	9	10	9	10	10	10	9	10
Never heard of test (no/don't know to q. 8) . . . . .	28	23	18	43	27	28	27	39	27	30
10. If a person has a positive blood test for infection with the AIDS virus, does this mean that they can give someone else the AIDS virus through sexual intercourse?										
Yes . . . . .	63	69	74	47	64	63	65	52	64	62
No . . . . .	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	4	3	3
Don't know . . . . .	6	6	5	7	5	6	6	4	6	5
Never heard of test (no/don't know to q. 8) . . . . .	28	23	18	43	28	29	27	39	27	30
11. Have you ever had your blood tested for infection with the AIDS virus?										
Yes . . . . .	5	7	5	2	6	4	4	8	4	6
Yes, in blood donation/transfusion . . . . .	2	3	3	1	3	2	2	2	2	3
No . . . . .	63	65	72	52	62	64	65	49	65	60
Don't know . . . . .	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Never heard of test (no/don't know to q. 8) . . . . .	28	23	18	43	28	29	27	39	27	30
12a. Have you ever thought about having this blood test?										
Already had test . . . . .	7	10	9	3	9	6	7	10	6	9
Yes . . . . .	11	15	15	5	12	11	11	19	9	15
No . . . . .	53	52	57	48	52	54	55	31	57	46
Don't know . . . . .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Never heard of test (no/don't know to q. 8) . . . . .	29	23	19	44	28	29	27	40	28	30
12b. Do you plan to be tested in the next 12 months?										
Already had test . . . . .	7	10	9	3	9	6	7	10	6	9
Yes . . . . .	5	7	5	1	5	4	4	11	3	7
No . . . . .	5	5	6	2	5	5	5	3	4	5
Don't know . . . . .	2	3	3	1	2	3	2	4	2	3
Never heard of test or thought about having test (no/don't know to q. 8 or q. 12a) . . . . .	81	75	76	92	80	83	83	71	84	76

See footnotes at end of table.

**Table 1. Provisional estimates of the percent of persons 18 years of age and over with selected AIDS knowledge and attitudes from the 1987 National Health Interview Survey, by selected characteristics: United States, September 1987—Con.**

[Data are based on household interviews of the civilian noninstitutionalized population. The survey design, general qualifications, and information on the reliability of the estimates are given in technical notes]

AIDS knowledge or attitude	Total	Age			Sex		Race		Marital status	
		18-29 years	30-49 years	50 years and over	Male	Female	White	Black	Married	Unmarried
13. Where would you go to have a blood test for the AIDS virus infection? <sup>3</sup>					Percent distribution <sup>1</sup>					
Nowhere/wouldn't take test . . . . .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
AIDS clinic . . . . .	3	4	3	2	5	1	2	5	1	5
Other clinic . . . . .	25	27	23	24	25	24	24	25	24	26
Doctor/HMO . . . . .	49	45	50	56	44	54	51	48	52	46
Red Cross/blood bank . . . . .	2	3	1	3	1	2	2	2	1	2
Other . . . . .	16	16	19	7	20	13	16	17	16	16
Don't know . . . . .	5	5	4	8	4	6	5	3	5	5
14. Where would you go to find out where to have this blood test? <sup>2,4</sup>										
AIDS hot line . . . . .	3	—	7	—	—	5	4	—	—	6
AIDS clinic . . . . .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other clinic . . . . .	14	24	15	—	29	4	13	24	15	13
Doctor/HMO . . . . .	40	12	39	76	44	37	45	—	26	54
Friends . . . . .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Public health department . . . . .	17	10	33	—	9	23	11	76	14	20
Other . . . . .	6	10	7	—	—	10	4	—	—	13
Nowhere/wouldn't take test . . . . .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Don't know . . . . .	29	44	21	24	19	36	34	—	45	13
15. Have you donated blood since 1985?										
Yes . . . . .	12	16	14	5	15	9	12	8	11	13
No . . . . .	88	84	85	95	85	91	88	91	89	87
Don't know . . . . .	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	0	0	0
16. Have you ever personally known anyone who had the blood test for the AIDS virus infection?										
Yes . . . . .	13	18	17	5	13	13	14	10	12	15
No . . . . .	85	81	82	93	85	85	85	87	86	83
Don't know . . . . .	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
17. What are the chances of someone you know getting the AIDS virus?										
High . . . . .	9	10	12	5	9	9	9	11	9	10
Medium . . . . .	17	23	17	11	17	16	16	20	15	19
Low . . . . .	38	38	43	32	42	35	40	24	41	33
None . . . . .	26	23	21	33	23	28	25	27	26	25
Refused . . . . .	0	—	0	—	0	—	0	—	0	—
Don't know . . . . .	11	6	7	19	9	12	10	18	10	13
18. What are your chances of getting the AIDS virus?										
High . . . . .	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
Medium . . . . .	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4
Low . . . . .	31	36	36	21	35	27	31	27	29	34
None . . . . .	60	56	56	68	57	63	60	60	62	56
Refused . . . . .	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	—	0	0
Don't know . . . . .	4	2	3	7	4	5	4	8	4	5
19. Here are methods some people use to prevent getting the AIDS virus through sexual activity. How effective is—										
19a. Using a diaphragm?										
Very effective . . . . .	2	3	1	2	2	2	1	5	2	2
Somewhat effective . . . . .	11	13	9	11	10	11	10	13	9	13
Not at all effective . . . . .	59	58	69	48	59	58	61	43	62	53
Don't know how effective . . . . .	21	18	16	29	20	21	21	25	21	21
Don't know method . . . . .	8	8	5	11	9	7	7	14	6	10
19b. Using a condom?										
Very effective . . . . .	33	37	35	27	33	33	34	27	33	33
Somewhat effective . . . . .	49	48	53	45	49	48	50	40	50	46
Not at all effective . . . . .	6	6	5	7	6	6	5	10	5	7
Don't know how effective . . . . .	9	6	5	17	9	9	8	16	9	9
Don't know method . . . . .	3	2	2	5	2	4	3	6	2	5
19c. Using a spermicidal jelly, foam, or cream?										
Very effective . . . . .	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	4	1	2
Somewhat effective . . . . .	12	12	13	11	12	13	12	16	11	14
Not at all effective . . . . .	59	61	67	47	59	58	61	44	61	53
Don't know how effective . . . . .	20	18	14	29	21	19	19	25	20	20
Don't know method . . . . .	8	7	5	11	7	8	7	12	6	10
19d. Being celibate, that is, not having sex at all?										
Very effective . . . . .	90	93	92	86	90	90	91	84	90	90
Somewhat effective . . . . .	4	3	4	5	4	4	4	5	4	4
Not at all effective . . . . .	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
Don't know how effective . . . . .	3	2	2	6	3	4	3	8	4	3
Don't know method . . . . .	1	0	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2

See footnotes at end of table.



**Table 1. Provisional estimates of the percent of persons 18 years of age and over with selected AIDS knowledge and attitudes from the 1987 National Health Interview Survey, by selected characteristics: United States, September 1987—Con.**

[Data are based on household interviews of the civilian noninstitutionalized population. The survey design, general qualifications, and information on the reliability of the estimates are given in technical notes]

AIDS knowledge or attitude	Total	Age			Sex		Race		Marital status	
		18-29 years	30-49 years	50 years and over	Male	Female	White	Black	Married	Unmarried
19e. Two people who do not have the AIDS virus having a completely monogamous relationship, that is, having sex only with each other?					Percent distribution <sup>1</sup>					
Very effective . . . . .	85	87	90	79	86	85	87	77	87	83
Somewhat effective . . . . .	7	8	6	9	7	8	7	10	7	9
Not at all effective . . . . .	2	3	1	2	2	2	1	3	1	2
Don't know how effective . . . . .	4	2	3	7	4	5	3	8	4	4
Don't know method . . . . .	1	1	1	3	1	2	1	2	1	2
20. Have you ever discussed AIDS with a friend or relative?										
Yes . . . . .	68	77	77	52	64	72	69	67	68	68
No . . . . .	31	23	23	47	35	28	31	33	31	32
Don't know . . . . .	0	-	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
21. When was the last time you discussed AIDS with a friend or relative?										
0-3 days ago . . . . .	20	21	23	17	19	21	20	21	21	18
4-7 days ago . . . . .	18	19	22	13	18	18	18	18	18	18
8-14 days ago . . . . .	8	10	9	5	7	9	8	6	8	8
15-31 days ago . . . . .	11	15	12	6	11	11	11	8	11	11
More than 31 days ago . . . . .	7	9	7	5	6	7	7	7	6	8
Never discussed (no/don't know to q. 20) . . . . .	33	24	24	50	37	29	33	35	33	33
Don't know . . . . .	3	3	2	5	3	3	3	4	3	3
24. Have you ever discussed AIDS with [any of your children age 10-17]?										
Yes . . . . .	14	1	32	3	12	15	13	16	18	7
No . . . . .	9	2	19	3	12	6	8	14	11	5
Don't know . . . . .	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
No children 10-17 years of age <sup>5</sup> . . . . .	77	97	49	94	76	78	78	71	71	89
25. Have your children had any instruction at school about AIDS?										
Yes . . . . .	10	1	22	3	10	10	9	14	13	4
No . . . . .	5	1	12	1	5	6	6	4	7	3
Don't know . . . . .	8	1	17	2	9	6	7	10	9	5
No children 10-17 years of age <sup>5</sup> . . . . .	77	97	49	94	76	78	78	71	71	89
26. Have you ever personally known anyone with the AIDS virus?										
Yes . . . . .	7	7	9	4	7	7	7	9	6	8
No . . . . .	91	92	89	94	91	92	92	87	92	90
Don't know . . . . .	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	3	1	2
27. Have you ever personally known anyone with AIDS?										
Yes . . . . .	7	6	9	4	6	7	6	10	6	8
No . . . . .	92	93	89	95	92	92	92	88	93	90
Don't know . . . . .	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	2
28. The U.S. Public Health Service has said that AIDS is one of the major health problems in the country but exactly how many people it affects is not known. The Surgeon General has proposed that a study be conducted and blood samples be taken to help find out how widespread the problem is. If you were selected in this national sample of people to have their blood tested with assurances of privacy of test results, would you have the test?										
Yes . . . . .	71	74	74	66	73	69	72	67	73	69
No . . . . .	20	16	18	24	19	20	19	21	19	20
Other . . . . .	3	3	3	3	2	4	3	2	3	3
Don't know . . . . .	6	6	6	7	5	7	6	9	5	8
29. Would you want to know the results of the blood test? <sup>6</sup>										
Yes . . . . .	97	98	97	97	97	97	97	97	97	98
No . . . . .	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	1
Don't know . . . . .	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

<sup>1</sup>Excludes persons for whom no response was recorded or who refused to respond. For question 2 through 27, total also excludes persons who never heard of AIDS.  
<sup>2</sup>Multiple responses may sum to more than 100 percent.  
<sup>3</sup>Based on persons answering yes to question 12a.  
<sup>4</sup>Based on persons answering don't know to question 13.  
<sup>5</sup>Based on question 22, Do you have any children aged 10-17? Question 23 was, How many do you have?  
<sup>6</sup>Based on persons answering yes to question 28.

NOTE: Total, age, sex, and marital status include persons of other and unknown race not shown separately under race.

## Technical notes

The National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) is a continuous, cross-sectional household interview survey. Each week, a probability sample of the civilian noninstitutionalized population is interviewed by personnel of the

**Table I. Sample size for the National Health Interview Survey of AIDS Knowledge and Attitudes and estimated adult population 18 years of age and over, by selected characteristics: United States, September 1987**

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Sample size</i>	<i>Estimated population in thousands</i>
All adults . . . . .	3,097	174,528
<b>Age</b>		
18-29 years . . . . .	770	47,725
30-49 years . . . . .	1,196	66,109
50 years and over . . . . .	1,131	60,695
<b>Sex</b>		
Male . . . . .	1,273	82,703
Female . . . . .	1,343	91,825
<b>Race</b>		
White . . . . .	2,545	151,003
Black . . . . .	461	19,107
<b>Marital status</b>		
Currently married . . . . .	1,670	110,968
Unmarried . . . . .	1,423	63,102

U.S. Bureau of the Census to obtain information on the health and other characteristics of each member of the household. Supplemental information is collected for all or a sample of household members. The AIDS knowledge and attitudes questions were asked of a single randomly chosen adult 18 years of age or over in each household. The estimates in this report are based on completed interviews with 3,097 persons, or about 85 percent of eligible respondents.

Table I contains the estimated population size of each of the demographic subgroups included in table 1 to allow readers to derive provisional estimates of the number of people in the United States with a given characteristic, for example, the number of men who have heard of AIDS. The population figures in table I are based on first-quarter 1987 data from the NHIS; they are not official population estimates. Table II shows approximate standard errors of estimates presented in table 1. Both the estimates in table 1 and the standard errors in table II are provisional. They may differ slightly from estimates made using the final data file because they were calculated using a simplified weighting procedure that does not adjust for all the factors used in weighting the final data file. The final data file covering the entire 5-month period of data collection, August through December 1987, will be available in 1988.

**Table II. Standard errors, expressed in percentage points, of estimated percents from the National Health Interview Survey of AIDS Knowledge and Attitudes, by selected characteristics: United States, September 1987**

<i>Estimated percent</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Age</i>			<i>Sex</i>		<i>Race</i>		<i>Marital status</i>	
		<i>18-29 years</i>	<i>30-49 years</i>	<i>50 years and over</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>Unmarried</i>
5 or 95 . . . . .	0.5	1.0	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.5	1.2	0.6	0.7
10 or 90 . . . . .	0.7	1.3	1.0	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.7	1.7	0.9	1.0
15 or 85 . . . . .	0.8	1.6	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.0	0.9	2.0	1.1	1.2
20 or 80 . . . . .	0.9	1.8	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.1	1.0	2.3	1.2	1.3
25 or 75 . . . . .	0.9	1.9	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.2	1.0	2.5	1.3	1.4
30 or 70 . . . . .	1.0	2.0	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.3	1.1	2.6	1.4	1.5
35 or 65 . . . . .	1.0	2.1	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.4	1.1	2.7	1.4	1.6
40 or 60 . . . . .	1.1	2.1	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.4	1.2	2.8	1.5	1.6
45 or 55 . . . . .	1.1	2.2	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.4	1.2	2.8	1.5	1.6
50 . . . . .	1.1	2.2	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.4	1.2	2.9	1.5	1.6

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