

# ***Epidemiology Bulletin***

*REPUBLIC OF CHINA*

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**- Contents -**

Increasing Number of AIDS Cases and  
HIV Infected Persons in Taiwan

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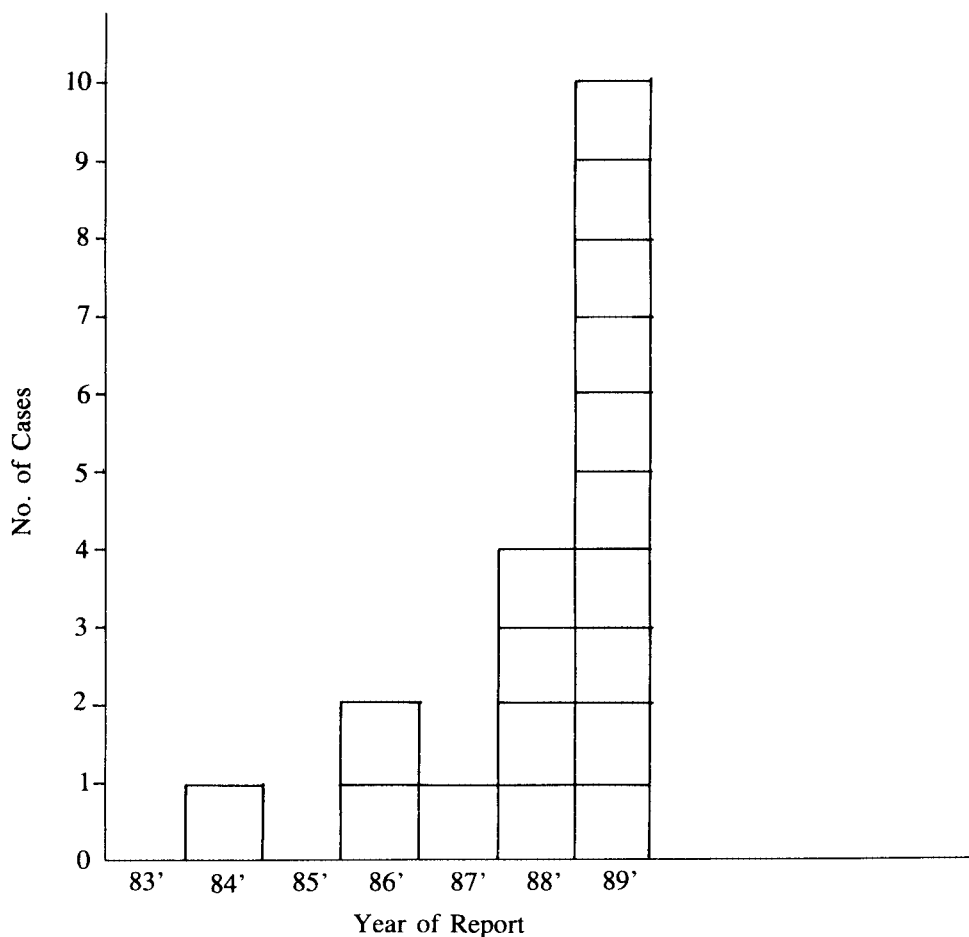
While the number of AIDS cases in Taiwan remains low at 18, the number of reported cases increased 2.5 times through the first 11 months of 1989 (10 cases) compared to 1988 (Figure 1). To date, 15 of the 18 cases have been in Chinese and all but eleven have died (Table 1). Ages have ranged from 25 to 68 years with a median age of 34. Almost all cases have presented with *Pneumocystis carinii* Pneumonia or opportunistic infections, three cases (2 homosexuals, 1 bisexual) reported prior to 1989 who had Kaposi sarcoma, of note, four cases had confirmed and one suspected tuberculosis which has been increasingly associated with AIDS/HIV. Although most cases were males, the first female was diagnosed in 1989 and cases now cover a wide spectrum of risk factors: homosexuals (8), bisexuals (4), hemophiliacs (4) and heterosexuals (2 — one of whom was a female prostitute).

Concurrent with the rise in AIDS cases, an increasing number of HIV seropositive patients have been identified through counseling and testing programs. From May 1, 1985 to January 31, 1990, a total of 2,305,317 serum specimens had been tested among person from 13 population groups (Table 2). Of those tested, 134 or .006% were positive. Although not necessarily representative of the population from which they were drawn, seroprevalence rates were highest among hemophiliacs (7.7%), foreigners (5.2%), homosexual and bisexual men (1.5%) and IV drug users (0.4%). Only one out of 126,973 (.001%) military recruits and 8 out of 1.7 million (.001%) blood donors were positive. Most of the seropositives were male: 107 males versus 8 females (19 sex unknown) (Table 3). Among those seropositive persons with known age, 83 or 62% were aged 20-39 years.

Worldwide, approximately 200,000 cases of AIDS have been reported from about 200 countries. However, underreporting is common and the World Health Organization has estimated that there may be three times as many cases<sup>1</sup>. Over 100,000 cases have been reported from the United States with 24% of those cases coming from New York State (population 17 million)<sup>2</sup>. In New York, 0.66% or 1 out of 152 newborns are born with HIV antibodies from HIV infected mothers<sup>3</sup>. In New York City 1.25% or 1 in 80 newborns are HIV seropositive. However, rates of HIV infection are much higher than this in several African countries.

While the number of AIDS cases and HIV infected persons in Taiwan remains low, education and prevention efforts must be continued. Once AIDS has been recognized in other countries, they have experienced exponential increases or at least a doubling of cases each year during the early stages of the epidemic. A wide spectrum of risk factors (homosexual, bisexual, heterosexual, hemophiliac, prostitute, Intravenous drug use) have already been recognized among those with HIV/AIDS in Taiwan, demonstrating that transmission could be occurring in these populations. As these cases increase, a number of social problems will need to be addressed. Education and prevention messages need to expand and a number of issues such as provision of health care and protection against discrimination need to be addressed.

Figure 1. Taiwan AIDS Cases by Year of Report



## AIDS cases in Taiwan: Dec. 1984 - Jan. 1990

No.	Age	Date reported	Natio-nality	Risk factor	Manifestation	Outcome
1		Dec. '84	USA	Homo	Kaposi	Back to US
2	25	Feb. '86	Chinese	Homo	Kaposi, Toxo., CMV Candida	Autopsied
3	38	Nov. '86	USA	Homo	PCP, Herpes, CMV Candida	Autopsied
4	39	Sep. '87	Chinese	Hemop	TB, Candida, Hepatoma	Expired
5	28	May '88	Chinese	Homo	PCP, +?	Autopsied
6	36	July '88	Chinese (F)	Hetero	PCP, CMV, Candida	Autopsied
7	48	Aug. '88	Chinese	Bisex	Kaposi, CMV, TB	Alive
8	34	Aug. '88	USA	Homo	PCP	Back to US
9	43	Jan. '89	Chinese	hemop	Salmonella, TB Candida, Cryptospor	Expired
10	25	Mar. '89	Chinese	Hemop	Toxo, + (Lymphoma ?)	Expired
11	56	May '89	Chinese	Homo	PCP	Autopsied
12	34	June '89	Chinese	Homo	PCP	Autopsied
13	45	Aug. '89	Chinese	Bisex	PCP, Candida	Alive
14	27	Aug. '89	Chinese	Bisex	Candida, Herpes Hepatitis	Autopsied
15	59	Sep. '89	Chinese	Bisex	PCP	Suicide
16	36	Oct. '89	Chinese	Homo	TB, Candida	Alive
17	34	Oct. '89	Chinese	Hemop	PCP ?, TB ?	Alive
18	68	Oct. '89	Chinese	Hetero	Candida, PCP	Alive

Table 2. HIV antibody screening tests in Taiwan since 1985

Risk groups	Number tested	anti-HIV positive	percent positive
Homosexual & Bisex. men	2,125	32	1.513
hemophiliacs	555	43	7.748
S.T.D Clinic	59,402	15	0.025
Foreigners	198	11	5.556
Blood Recipients	3,303	2	0.030
Blood Donors	1,757,537	11	0.001
Prostitutes	11,531	1	0.009
I.V. Drug Abusers	1,303	6	0.460
Prisoners	11,609	0	-
Military Recruits	290,091	1	0.000
Students	12,178	0	-
Others	155,485	12	0.008
Total:	2,305,317	134	0.006