

Epidemiological Analysis of Residents with HIV/AIDS in Eastern Taiwan

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Abstract

AIDS is a communicable disease of global importance caused by the infection of HIV. Between 1984 and 2006, there were 13,702 persons reported to have HIV infection and 2,981 persons developed AIDS in Taiwan. The disease has become a serious burden on medical resources and has high social costs. In this study, we explore the epidemiology of persons living with HIV/AIDS in eastern Taiwan between 1991 and 2006. We combined and integrated the records from epidemiological investigations conducted by the Sixth Branch with data from Taiwan CDC National Notifiable Disease Surveillance System. EpiInfoTM and SAS 9 were used for statistic analyses and diagram drafting. Between 1991 and 2006, there were 257 HIV-infected individuals reported in eastern Taiwan; among them, 89 developed AIDS. Before 2004, the leading risk factor for persons living with HIV/AIDS was sexual contact, which was replaced by injection drug use in 2005. Among those infected with HIV, the largest age group was persons aged 20-29 years, followed by those aged 30-39 years. During 2004 to 2006, the average age of HIV-infected cases in eastern Taiwan through sexual contact

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between men showed a decreasing trend. The first HIV infection case in eastern Taiwan through sexual contact occurred in 1991; the first case through injection drug use occurred in 1995; and the first mother-to-child transmission occurred in 1999. Compared to HIV infection cases elsewhere in Taiwan, they all took place one year after the first of such cases were discovered in Taiwan. In addition, changes in characteristics (occupation and other risk factors) of persons infected with HIV in eastern Taiwan also lagged behind the rest of the country. Sio-lin and Wan-rung Townships of Hua-lian County have higher incidence of both HIV infection and AIDS; these two townships also have the highest incidence of TB in Taiwan. Therefore, we should be alert to prevent the synergistic effect between HIV and TB being observed in other countries. In 2006, new cases of HIV infections in the eastern region decreased along with other parts of Taiwan. This shows the effectiveness of harm reduction programs such as the needle exchange program and the methadone maintenance treatment implemented by the government

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