

Twenty-Five Years of AIDS

June 5, 1981 – AIDS First Reported
Center for Disease Control (CDC)

Twenty-five years ago, on June 5, 1981, MMWR published a report of five cases of *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia (PCP) among previously healthy young men in Los Angeles (1). All of the men were described as "homosexuals"; two had died. Local clinicians and the Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) Officer stationed at the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, prepared the report and submitted it for MMWR publication in early May 1981. Before publication, MMWR editorial staff sent the submission to CDC experts in parasitic and sexually transmitted diseases. The editorial note that accompanied the published report stated that the case histories suggested a "cellular-immune dysfunction related to a common exposure" and a "disease acquired through sexual contact." The report prompted additional case reports from New York City, San Francisco, and other cities. At about the same time, CDC's investigation drug unit, the sole distributor of pentamidine, the therapy for PCP, began to receive requests for the drug from physicians also to treat young men. In June 1981, CDC developed an investigative team to identify risk factors and to develop a case definition for national surveillance. Within 18 months, epidemiologists conducted studies and prepared MMWR reports that identified all of the major risks factors for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). In March 1983, CDC issued recommendations for prevention of sexual, drug-related, and occupational transmission based on these early epidemiologic studies and before the cause of the new, unexplained illness was known.

Timeline of AIDS

Twenty-Five Years

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

1981

- June 5, CDC reports a cluster of *Pneumocystis pneumonia* in five gay male drug users in Los Angeles.
- July 4, CDC reports clusters of Kaposi's sarcoma and *Pneumocystis pneumonia* among gay men in California and New York City.

1982

- June 18, CDC MMWR 1982 31(23):305-7
"Exposure to some substance (rather than an infectious agent) may

eventually lead to immunodeficiency among a subset of the homosexual male population that shares a particular style of life. For example, Marmor et al. recently reported that exposure to amyl nitrite was associated with an increased risk of KS in New York City. Exposure to inhalant sexual stimulants, central-nervous-system stimulants, and a variety of other "street" drugs was common among males belonging to the cluster of cases of KS and PCP in Los Angeles and Orange counties." source of this quote

- July 9, CDC reports a cluster of opportunistic infections and Kaposi's sarcoma among Haitians recently entering the United States.
- July 27, The term AIDS (for acquired immune deficiency syndrome) is proposed at a meeting in Washington of gay-community leaders, federal bureaucrats and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). source TIME
- September 24, Current Trends Update on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) - United States
- CDC defines a case of AIDS as a disease, at least moderately predictive of a defect in cell-mediated immunity, occurring in a person with no known cause for diminished resistance to that disease. Such diseases include KS, PCP, and serious OOI. [...] Diagnoses are considered to fit the case definition only if based on sufficiently reliable methods (generally histology or culture). Some patients who are considered AIDS cases on the basis of diseases only moderately predictive of cellular immunodeficiency may not actually be immunodeficient and may not be part of the current epidemic.

1983

- March, FDA issues donor screening guidelines. AIDS high-risk groups should not donate blood/plasma products.

1984

- April 23, U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Margaret Heckler announced at a press conference that an American scientist, Dr. Robert Gallo, had discovered the probable cause of AIDS: the retrovirus subsequently named human immunodeficiency virus or HIV in 1986. She also declared that a vaccine would be available within two years.

1985

- March 2, FDA approves first AIDS antibody screening tests for use on all donated blood and plasma intended for transfusion.
- October, a conference of public health officials including representatives of the Centers for Disease Control and World Health Organization met in Bangui and defined AIDS in Africa as, "prolonged fevers for a month or more, weight loss of over 10% and prolonged diarrhea".

- Rock Hudson is the first major American celebrity whose AIDS diagnosis became public knowledge

1986

- HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) adopted as name of the retrovirus that was first proposed as the cause of AIDS by Luc Montagnier of France, who named it LAV (lymphadenopathy associated virus) and Robert Gallo of the United States, who named it HTLV-III (human T-lymphotropic virus type III)
- January 14, "By 1996, three to five million Americans will be HIV positive and one million will be dead of AIDS" - NIAID Director Anthony Fauci, New York Times

1987

- FDA approves AZT, a potent new drug for AIDS patients, which prolongs the lives of some patients by reducing infections
- "By 1990 one in five heterosexuals will be dead of AIDS" - Oprah Winfrey.

1989

- Amanda Blake (1929-1989), actress (Kitty Russell on Gunsmoke) dies.

1990

- Ryan White, hemophiliac, (born 1971), dies from AIDS.

1991

- Basketball star "Magic" Johnson announces he has tested positive.

1993

- CDC expands definition of AIDS to include a person with HIV infection and a CD4 cell count below 200. CDC estimated that the expanded definition could increase cases reported in 1993 by approximately 75%.
- Arthur Ashe, tennis player and social activist; infected by blood transfusion during heart surgery dies.

1994

- Pedro Zamora, cast member of MTV's reality series The Real World, dies.

1995

- The first protease inhibitor Saquinavir, is approved.
- Highly active anti-retroviral therapy (HAART) or "AIDS cocktail" saves lives and prevents infections. AIDS is transformed to a treatable disease for those that can get the medication and are adherent to taking the pills as prescribed.

1996

- Robert Gallo's discovery that a natural compound known as chemokines can block HIV and halt the progression of AIDS was hailed by Science magazine as one of that year's most important scientific breakthroughs.

1997

- September 2, "The most recent estimate of the number of Americans infected (with HIV), 750,000, is only half the total that government officials used to cite over a decade ago, at a time when experts believed that as many as 1.5 million people carried the virus." article in the Washington Post
- "There is no recognized standard for establishing the presence or absence of HIV-1 antibody in human blood." (Abbott Labs test kit instructions)
- Based on the Bangui definition the WHO's cumulative number of AIDS cases from 1980 through 1997 for all of Africa was 620,000. For comparison, the cumulative total of AIDS cases in the USA through 1997 was 641,087.
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- 1998
- December 10, International Human Rights Day, Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) was launched to campaign for greater access to HIV treatment for all South Africans, by raising public awareness and understanding about issues surrounding the availability, affordability and use of HIV treatments. TAC campaigns against the view that AIDS is a death sentence.

1999

- January 31, studies suggest that a retrovirus, SIVcpz (simian immunodeficiency virus) from the common chimpanzee Pan troglodytes, may have passed to human populations in west equatorial Africa during the twentieth century and developed into various types of HIV.
- F Gao, E Bailes, DL Robertson, Y Chen, CM Rodenburg, SF Michael, LB Cummins, LO Arthur, M Peeters, GM Shaw, PM Sharp and BH Hahn. Origin of HIV-1 in the chimpanzee Pan troglodytes troglodytes. Nature 397, 436-41 (1999).
- RA Weis and RW Wrangham. From Pan to pandemic. Nature 397, 385-6 (1999).

- The role of chemokines in protection from progression of HIV infection to AIDS is changing the medical understanding of AIDS.

2000

- WHO estimated between 15% and 20% of new HIV infections worldwide were the result of blood transfusions, where the donors were not screened or inadequately screened for HIV.

2001

- September 21, FDA licensed the first nucleic acid test (NAT) systems intended for screening of blood & plasma donors.

2002

- July, Swiss HIV Cohort Study concludes, "The initiation of HAART in asymptomatic patients with CD4 cell count $> 350 \times 10^6/l$ significantly delayed clinical progression. However, the risk of severe clinical events with deferred therapy was low and must be counter balanced against the burden and toxicity of HAART."
- September, Guidelines for using antiretroviral agents among HIV-infected adults and adolescents.
- "Antiretroviral regimens are complex, have serious side effects, pose difficulty with adherence, and carry serious potential consequences from the development of viral resistance because of nonadherence to the drug regimen or suboptimal levels of antiretroviral agents. Patient education and involvement in therapeutic decisions are critical. Treatment should usually be offered to all patients with symptoms ascribed to HIV infection. Recommendations for offering antiretroviral therapy among asymptomatic patients require analysis of real and potential risks and benefits. In general, treatment should be offered to persons who have <350 CD4+ T cells/mm³ or plasma HIV ribonucleic acid (RNA) levels of $>55,000$ copies/mL"

2004

- New guidelines from the World Health Organization and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services defer antiretroviral medications for a person with no symptoms who has a CD4 cell count above 350 and viral load under 100,000. January 5, "Individual risk of acquiring HIV and experiencing rapid disease progression is not uniform within populations", says Anthony S. Fauci, M.D., director of NIAID.

2005

- January 21, CDC recommended anti-retroviral post-exposure prophylaxis for people exposed to HIV from rapes, accidents or occasional unsafe sex or drug use.
- akgatho Mandela, son of Nelson Mandela, dies.
- 4 million people were infected with HIV and 2.8 million people died.

2006

- Over 40 million people worldwide are HIV positive and 25 million have died.
- The battles continues.

Note: The first known case of HIV in a human was found in a person who died in the Congo in 1959, forty-seven years ago.
