

27pc say relatives with HIV should leave

By ALISON WISEMAN

MORE than a quarter of people think an HIV-infected relative should move out of the family home, a survey has shown.

AIDS workers said they were alarmed by the result of the survey which they said almost certainly meant there was even less acceptance of HIV-positive people outside the family.

The survey, which was published by the Hong Kong AIDS Foundation yesterday, showed that almost 10 per cent of people questioned said an HIV-infected family member would definitely have to move out, while

more than 17 per cent said they ought to leave.

Foundation chairman Dr Leong Che-hung said: "This is very alarming because people are even discriminating against their own relatives and we hope the next survey will show a marked reduction in this area and far more understanding."

More than 30 per cent of almost 800 husbands and wives from different families said they were "not very concerned" about AIDS, while almost seven per cent said they were not concerned at all.

Dr Leong said: "The findings reflect the fact that many Hong Kong

people are still apathetic about AIDS and still consider it to be other people's problem.

"But we are working to address this general indifference in the community through intensive publicity and down-to-earth education."

The lack of concern came despite more than 54 per cent saying they thought at least half of all married men were unfaithful to their partners and 82 per cent knowing that it was possible for women to contract AIDS from their husbands.

Although more than 91 per cent of interviewees said condoms should be used to protect women who sus-

pected their husbands had another partner, only half - including males and females - believed it was practical for women to insist on the use of condoms.

Dr Leong said: "I think the use of condoms is a major cultural problem in the Chinese community and while women in other parts of the world might be able to insist their partner uses a condom, it is not the same here.

"This makes it important for the male to take the initiative and protect himself and his family by either

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Relatives with HIV 'should go'

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not having extra-marital sex or using a condom if he does so."

But more than 70 per cent of people questioned said they were willing to discuss AIDS with their spouses and their children, although less than eight per cent had done so in the past three months.

Dr Leong added: "The main reason given for not discussing AIDS with family members was embarrassment, although the number of people willing to discuss the issue is encouraging."

The benchmark survey, which was carried out in June this year by the Community Research Programme on AIDS at the Chi-

nese University on behalf of the foundation, concentrated on acceptance of people with AIDS and knowledge of the disease.

The same survey will be carried out next year and 1996 so the foundation can assess the effectiveness of its work concerning AIDS and the family.

The foundation will concentrate its AIDS education effort on the family over the next two years, with the AIDS and the Family programme kicking off at Yuen Long Plaza on September 25.

Chief executive Fred Tong Kin-sang said: "AIDS is not just a problem for high-risk groups but a matter of concern for everyone in Hong Kong which is why we are targeting the average family."

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