

# 11 more victims of AIDS discovered in Hongkong

By SA NI HARTE

ELEVEN more people were found to have been infected by the AIDS virus in the first quarter of this year.

This brings the number of people in Hongkong exposed to Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome to 83 - including four confirmed AIDS patients who have died and 45 haemophiliacs.

Eleven are no longer in Hongkong. Only two are women.

During the first three months of this year, 8,425 people were tested for AIDS by the Virus Unit of the Medical and Health Department. Of these, 11 males tested positive for the HIV (human

immuno-deficiency virus) antibody. They included one haemophiliac, one who acquired the disease overseas through a blood transfusion, seven who acquired it through sexual contacts and two unknown cases.

Out of the 11, three were Chinese, six were expatriates and two unknown because only the blood, without further details, was referred from private practitioners.

There was a sixfold increase in the number of referrals from private practitioners for the HIV antibody test - from a previous quarterly average of 35 to 224. Five were found to have the AIDS antibody.

Three people who tested positive for HIV antibody were from 443 referrals from

Government hospitals and clinics; two out of 7,600 were from social hygiene clinics and one case came from 21 haemophiliacs who received regular treatment with blood products before these were made virus-free in 1985 by a form of compulsory heat treatment.

The chairman of the Government's scientific working group in charge of monitoring the AIDS problem, Dr E.K. Yeoh, said yesterday the latest figures indicated the extent of infection in people who came forward for testing had not increased.

"The proportion of the people who tested positive, compared with the number of tests, is similar to previous quarters," he said after

releasing the latest statistics on the AIDS surveillance program.

Dr Yeoh said the increase in referrals from private practitioners showed more people had come forward for blood tests because of increased Government publicity.

Asked if the Government was certain all cases of AIDS in Hongkong had been identified, Dr Yeoh said: "We can't be certain of all cases but we have had good co-operation from the private sector, even in terms of people detected with antibody positive."

He said the Government could not use coercion in getting information on people with AIDS.

number of blood donor units tested by the Red Cross for the AIDS antibody totalled 232,945.

Four blood donor units were found to be infected by the virus to date.

Since the Government intensified its education and publicity campaign on AIDS last month, the AIDS counselling service had received 2,411 calls.

Meanwhile, the Medical and Health Department also announced preliminary findings of a survey to test people's awareness and knowledge of AIDS.

It found virtually all adults were aware of AIDS, with television and newspapers being the primary sources of awareness.

"We just want general information, which is necessary for the Government to keep tabs on the situation."

If the Government tried other methods, people would have to divulge intimate details which would prevent them from coming forward, he said.

Since April 1985, a total of 46,818 people had been tested and, so far, 83 had been found positive.

During the quarter ending this March, the Hongkong Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service had also carried out HIV tests on 38,869 blood donors and one of them was found to be positive.

Since its mass screening program in August 1985, the

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