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New York babies born to HIV-infected Mothers.

One out of every 60 women giving birth in Manhattan and the Bronx is infected with HIV, concludes a study by the New York State Department of Health. Public Health officials anonymously tested blood from every infant born in the state of New York during 1988. Because the mother's HIV antibody crosses to the infant before birth, blood from an infant measures the mother's antibody rather than the infant's antibody. Doctors estimate that 30-50



percent of these infants will be actually infected with HIV and develop AIDS. Most of the women became infected through IV drug use or through sex with IV drug users. In other parts of New York state, fewer child-bearing women were infected — one out of every 612 women.

Reference: L. Novick and others. "HIV Seroprevalence in Newborns in New York State," JAMA, March 24-31, 1989, pp: 1745-50.

AIDS incubation period

Half of the men infected with HIV in San Francisco will develop AIDS within 10 years after the time they become infected, say statisticians from the University of California. These scientists applied a new method of calculating statistics to the detailed information known about HIV-infection among gay men in San Francisco. The risk of developing AIDS changes at different times after infection. The statisticians predict that out of 100 men infected with HIV, fewer than one man will develop AIDS within the first two years of infection. Two additional men will develop AIDS at three years, four additional men at four years, six additional men at five years, seven additional men at six years, eight additional men at eight years, seven additional men at nine years, and six additional men will develop AIDS at 10 years after infection.

Reference: P. Bacchette and A. Moss. "Incubation Period of AIDS in San Francisco." Nature, March 16, 1989, pp: 251-53.

AZT may help bleeding problem

People with ARC and a bleeding disorder caused by too few platelets (a blood cell that helps stop bleeding) may benefit from taking AZT, say physicians in France. Although AZT led to small improvements in most of the people with ARC, one out of four of the patients had dramatic improvements.

Reference: E. Oksenhendler and others. "Zidovudine for Thrombocytopenic Purpura Related to HIV Infection." Annals of Internal Medicine, March 1, 1989, pp: 365-68.

Scientists create new antibody-like molecule that blocks HIV

Using space-age technology that builds molecules, scientists designed a new substance that prevents HIV from infecting T-cells. The new antibody-like molecules, known as immunoadhesins, have two parts. One part of the molecule mimics the portion of the T-cell that is the target for HIV. And the other part of the molecule mimics the portion of the immune system that kills virus. Scientists hope that the resulting antibody-like molecules will bind with HIV, prevent HIV from infecting healthy T-cells, and enable the body's other immune mechanisms to dispose of HIV and HIV-infected cells. Tests have not yet begun on humans.

Reference: D. Capon and others. "Designing D4 Immunoadhesins for AIDS Therapy." Nature, February 9, 1989, pp: 525-30.

HIV mutates

Parts of viruses from different strains of HIV can recombine and form completely new mutations within the same person and lead to AIDS, say researchers from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. Studying HIV in the laboratory, scientists determined that harmless parts of HIV can reconnect with parts of the virus from another strain of HIV and make a new variation of HIV within the same person. Each new strain of HIV has a slightly different ability to cause damage to the infected person's T-cells. The scientists believe this may explain why AIDS develops only after years of HIV infection.

Reference: F. Clavel and others. "Genetic Recombination of HIV." Journal of Virology, March 1989, pp: 1455-59.

Fewer cases of Kaposi's sarcoma

Fewer people with AIDS develop Kaposi's sarcoma now than during the early part of the epidemic, report San Francisco Department of Health officials. In 1981, 60 percent of the people with AIDS in San Francisco also had Kaposi's sarcoma. Kaposi's sarcoma remains far more common among gay and bisexual men, than among heterosexuals and IV-drug users. Investigators are uncertain if the decline in Kaposi's sarcoma is caused by less frequent use of poppers, or by following safer sex guidelines which prevent infection with additional viruses.

Reference: G. Rutherford and others. "The Epidemiology of AIDS-Related Kaposi's Sarcoma in San Francisco." The Journal of Infectious Diseases, March 1989, pp: 569-71.

New use for AZT

Workers at the National Institutes of Health will be offered a 6-week course of AZT if they are exposed to HIV through work-related injuries. Scientists are uncertain if AZT will actually protect someone from infection, even if AZT is started soon after the time the person was exposed to HIV. Because so few lab technicians and health care workers who are exposed to HIV actually become infected, it will take years to determine if treatment with AZT soon after exposure really works.

Reference: W. Booth. "NIH Offers AZT to Exposed Workers." Science, March 3, 1989, pg: 1137.

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