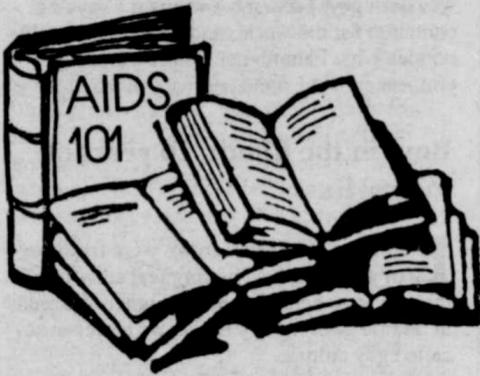


## Researchers measure amount of HIV

For the first time, scientists have measured the amount of HIV in the blood of people with ARC and AIDS. Using a difficult laboratory technique, these researchers found that people with ARC and AIDS have over 100 times more HIV in their blood than do people who are infected with HIV but are otherwise healthy. However, PWAs who received AZT had less HIV than did PWAs who did not take the drug. This technique for measuring HIV may also be useful for showing the effectiveness of drugs used to fight HIV.

Reference: *D. Ho and others. Quantitation of HIV-1 in the blood of infected persons. The New England Journal of Medicine. December 14, 1989, pp: 1621-1625.*



BY JEFFREY ZURLINDEN

## No HIV in urine

Researchers could not find any sign of HIV in urine from people infected with HIV. Although all of the 48 people in this study had HIV in their blood, and half of them had ARC or AIDS, none of these HIV-infected people had HIV in their urine. The researchers conclude that the risk of becoming infected with HIV through urine is very low or impossible.

Reference: *P. Skolnik and others. Absence of infectious HIV-1 in the urine of seropositive viremic subjects. Journal of Infectious Diseases. December, 1989, pp: 1056-1058.*

## Insects don't spread HIV

Bedbugs and mosquitos don't spread HIV from one person to another, conclude scientists at the Centers for Disease Control. After eating blood that was loaded with HIV, these bugs did not become infected with HIV. The scientists also injected HIV directly into the bugs, but HIV did not multiply or live for more than a few hours within the bugs. Although the scientists found HIV on the bug's mouthparts for up to eight hours, they estimate that because the amount of HIV is so small, a person would have to have about 500 million insect bites to become infected with HIV. Apparently cleaner than humans, bedbugs and mosquitos wash their mouths after every meal.

Reference: *P. Webb and others. Potential for insect transmission of HIV: experimental exposure of Cimex hemipterous and Toxorhynchites amboinensis HIV. Journal of Infectious Diseases. December, 1989, pp: 970-975.*

## HIV infection when antibody tests are negative

It may take years for people infected with HIV to make antibodies to the usual HIV-

antibody test. Using a newly developed test — called DNA enzymatic amplification — that detects tiny pieces of HIV, researchers at Northwestern University Medical School found pieces of HIV in the blood cells of gay men between 6 to 42 months before they showed signs of infection detectable by the usual HIV-antibody test and Western Blot. The men were part of a long-term study that collected blood every six months since 1984. Twenty-four men who were uninfected at the start of the study later became infected with HIV. The researchers thawed previously collected blood from these men and tested the blood cells for pieces of HIV. Twenty of the 24 men were infected with HIV at least six months before they had positive results for the usual HIV-antibody test, and two men were infected as long as 42 months.

Reference: *Steven Wolinsky and others. HIV-1 infection a median of 18 months before a diagnostic Western Blot. Annals of Internal Medicine. December 15, 1989, pp: 961-971.*

## Bone marrow transplant may help

PWAs may benefit from receiving bone marrow transplants. Bone marrow was transplanted by doctors at Johns Hopkins into a 41-year-old man with AIDS and a rare form of cancer. Before the bone marrow transplant, he received high doses of AZT to stop HIV, plus chemotherapy and radiation to kill his cancer. Because chemotherapy and radiation also killed his own bone marrow — the source of new blood cells — he needed new bone marrow from another person. After the transplant, doctors could not find any signs of HIV infection. However, the cancer returned, and 47 days later he died. Overall, only 25 - 50 percent of people who receive bone marrow transplants survive. But doctors are hopeful that bone marrow transplant combined with AZT may eventually help a small number of PWAs.

Reference: *H. Kent Holland and others. Allogeneic bone marrow transplantation, AZT, and HIV-1 Infection. Annals of Internal Medicine. December 15, 1989, pp: 973-980.*

## Why some men are infectious

Researchers in Boston studied pairs of gay lovers to find out why some men remain uninfected with HIV despite having sex with an infected lover. After testing over 300 pairs of lovers, these researchers found seven men who were probably infected by their lover and eleven men who had not become infected. All 18 men had about the same amount of anal sex without using a condom, and all of their lovers were infected with HIV. However, the men who remained uninfected had lovers who had lower numbers of suppressor T cells. These researchers concluded that men with high numbers of suppressor T cells and low helper to suppressor ratios more easily infect other men with HIV during anal sex without condoms. Usually men have high numbers of suppressor T cells and a low helper to suppressor ratio soon after they initially become infected with HIV, when they become infected with another virus like herpes or CMV, and when they have ARC or AIDS. Most of the men in the study appeared healthy when they infected their lover with HIV. Using latex condoms prevents the spread of HIV, and lovers should always use condoms.

Reference: *G. Seage and others. Increased suppressor T cells in probable transmitters of HIV infection. American Journal of Public Health. December, 1989, pp: 1638-1641.*

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