

DTC slows AIDS

Men with ARC benefit from the drug diethyldithiocarbamate, also known as Dithiocarb or DTC. German scientists compared 60 men who received DTC orally, DTC intravenously, or no medication. Intravenous DTC given once a week worked best. None of the men taking intravenous DTC, two men taking oral DTC, and 13 men who did not take DTC progressed to AIDS. DTC appears to work by supporting the immune system, rather than by killing HIV. In U.S. studies, DTC is given to people with early HIV infection, ARC and AIDS. DTC is also known as Imuthiol in the United States.

Reference: E. Reisinger and others. *Inhibition of HIV progression by dithiocarb.* The Lancet. March 24, 1990, pg:679-82.

Herpes-6 does not speed AIDS

Infection with herpes-6 virus does not increase the chances of becoming infected with HIV or speed the progression of HIV-infected people to AIDS, say scientists at the Centers for Disease Control. At one time, these scientists had thought that herpes-6 acted as a key to turn on HIV within T-cells and speed the progression to AIDS. Current studies show that herpes-6 has no effect on the course of HIV infection.

Reference: T. Spira and others. *Lack of correlation between HIV-6 infection and the course of HIV infection.* The Journal of Infectious Diseases. March 1990, pg: 567-70.

Salk vaccine gets go ahead

An AIDS vaccine developed by Dr. Jonas Salk received approval from the Food and Drug Administration for continued testing. Made from whole HIV that is killed and partially stripped of its outer coat, the Salk AIDS vaccine will be tested for 36 weeks on 60 HIV-infected people who are otherwise healthy. During this first round of tests, Salk hopes to find the best dose of vaccine to stimulate the immune system to halt or reverse the effects of HIV on T-cells. Unlike other vaccines that only prevent infection, the Salk AIDS vaccine may also help keep HIV-infected people from developing AIDS. The vaccine has already undergone testing in chimpanzees and a small number of human volunteers. Salk is best known as the developer of a vaccine against polio.

New strain of HIV?

In Belgium, two people who had lived in Cameroon went to the doctor because they had swollen lymph glands, and they wanted to be tested for AIDS. When doctors tested the two for HIV antigens, they found something unexpected. The test results were not exactly HIV-1, but not exactly HIV-2. After completing extensive tests to describe the exact genetic material in this virus, the doctors concluded that it was a distinct virus very similar to HIV-1. They are uncertain if this new virus, called ANT-70, is a mutant strain of HIV-1, or if it is a link between HIV and the immunosuppressive virus that infects monkeys. So far, it has been found in only two people.

Reference: R. De Leys and others. *Isolation and partial characterization of an unusual Human Immunodeficiency Retrovirus from two persons of East-Central African origin.* Journal of Virology. March 1990, pg: 1207-15.



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AL721 doesn't work

The drug AL721 does not help people with ARC or AIDS, say doctors in London. Although promising in test tube experiments, AL721 does not decrease the amount of HIV in the blood, or prevent opportunistic infections. These researchers do not encourage further studies with AL721.

Reference: B. Peters and others. *Ineffectiveness of AL721 in HIV disease.* The Lancet. March 3, 1990, pg: 545-6.

Antibodies may speed AIDS

People with AIDS eventually develop antibodies that help, rather than hinder, HIV to destroy the immune system, say researchers in San Francisco. The researchers were able to find more of these HIV-friendly antibodies in people with AIDS, than in people who are infected but otherwise healthy. Researchers are not certain why HIV-friendly antibodies are produced, or how they work to help HIV to spread within an infected person. They hope that understanding these new antibodies will lead to therapies that block their harmful effects.

Reference: J. Homsy and others. *Serum enhancement of HIV infection correlates with disease in HIV-infected individuals.* Journal of Virology. April 1990, pg: 1437-40.

Ribozymes work against HIV

In test tube experiments, a newly studied group of substances called ribozymes cause HIV to break apart, according to scientists at the National Institute of Health. Originally found in germs that cause disease in plants, ribozymes attach to the reproducing parts of HIV and cause them to split into harmless pieces. Although this research shows promise for developing an entirely new class of drugs to fight HIV, it will be years before ribozymes are tested in humans.

Reference: N. Sarver and others. *Ribozymes as potential anti-HIV-1 therapeutic agents.* Science. March 9, 1990, pg: 1222-25.

New estimates for AIDS in San Francisco

The Department of Public Health in San Francisco now predicts that 1,411 to 1,974 people in San Francisco will develop AIDS this year. By 1993, the number of people diagnosed with AIDS since the beginning of the epidemic will reach 12,349 to 17,022 or approximately one quarter of all the gay and bisexual men in San Francisco. The Health Department estimates that half the people who are infected with HIV will develop AIDS within 11 years after the time they became infected.

Reference: G. Lemp and many others. *Projections of AIDS Morbidity and mortality in San Francisco.* JAMA. March 16, 1990, pg: 1497-1501.

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