

Monthly Support Groups
For Parents, Youth & Children
(Meets second Monday of month)

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national news

Episcopal bishop cleared of heresy charge

By a vote of 7-1, a special Episcopal Church court panel ruled that church doctrine does not forbid the ordination of practicing gay men and lesbians, according to a Reuter report. The decision means that retired Bishop Walter Righter, accused of heresy for ordaining Barry Stopfel as a deacon in 1990, will not face a church heresy trial.

This is the first heresy charge brought by the Episcopal Church since 1924. The church court panel of bishops began deliberation in February, focusing on whether church doctrine banned the ordination of noncelibate homosexuals, and whether Bishop Righter violated his vows when he ordained Stopfel.

The decision can be appealed. It is expected that conservatives will push for a formal prohibition in church law against the ordination of gay men and lesbians. The soonest such measures can be considered is at the July 1997 general convention of the Episcopal Church.

The Episcopal Church has no celibacy requirement for heterosexual priests and allows them to marry.



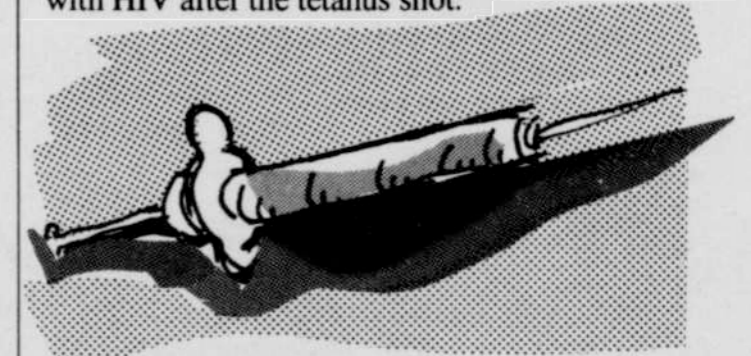
discovery of fusin opens up important possibilities: It may yield an explanation of exactly how HIV infects the CD4 cells of the immune system, and how, if other variants of fusin are discovered, the virus invades other white blood cells called macrophages that act as long-term reservoirs for HIV. In addition, fusin molecules could help lead to a new class of AIDS drugs and, perhaps, a vaccine, that would block the fusins and prevent HIV from invading the cells.

At least two other laboratories have confirmed Berger's discovery.

Routine vaccinations spark jump in HIV production

According to a study published in May's *New England Journal of Medicine*, tetanus shots can cause a dramatic surge in the amount of HIV produced in people infected with the virus. According to a Reuter report, the research, conducted by Dr. Sharilyn K. Stanley and other researchers at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, may explain why frequent illness seems to make HIV more aggressive, especially in countries where people are frequently exposed to viruses, bacteria and parasites.

The study involved giving tetanus boosters to 23 people, 13 of whom were infected with HIV but were asymptomatic. Those infected with HIV started producing between two and 36 times more copies of the virus. Blood samples from the 10 uninfected participants also were studied. The blood cells of seven of those 10 became easier to infect with HIV after the tetanus shot.



Stanley and her team emphasized that these findings do not mean that people infected with HIV should stop receiving immunizations, saying the protection provided by vaccinations far outweighs the short-term increase in HIV production in the body.

The increase in HIV in the bodies of those vaccinated peaked after about 13 days and disappeared after six weeks.

Gay center's ad in school newspaper draws flak

The Billy DeFrank Lesbian and Gay Community Center in San Jose, Calif., offers a safe place for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transsexual youth or those who are questioning their sexuality to talk with other teens or to receive referrals to professionals. Ads for the center run in most of the high school newspapers in Santa Clara County.

After refusing for two years to run the center's ad, Gilroy High School's newspaper, *The Free Press*, reversed its policy, reports the *San Jose Mercury News*. The ad lists discussion groups and support groups available to youth aged 14 to 17.

Gilroy High School Principal Ernie Zermeno said he agreed to publish the ad this year because teachers, school graduates and the district's health official convinced him the services were needed by some of the students.

Patty Rink, a Gilroy mother who opposes homosexuality on moral grounds, and Pastor Eric Smith of Gilroy's South Valley Community Church, have both been public about their disapproval of the ad. Rink plans to take the issue to the school board.

Compiled by Kristine Chatwood

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HIV home test kit approved by FDA

The first home test kit for detecting HIV won approval May 14 from the Federal Food and Drug Administration. The FDA based its approval on data showing that each of the components of the test system, as well as the complete system, was safe and effective, according to a Reuter report.

The test kit system, called the Confide HIV Testing Service, was developed and will be marketed by Direct Access Diagnostics, a subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson.

The system consists of three integrated components: an over-the-counter home blood collection kit; HIV-1 antibody testing at a certified lab; and a test result center that provides the test results, counseling and anonymous referral.

For now, the kit will be available for over-the-counter purchase in Texas only. People living in Texas and Florida will be able to purchase kits through a toll-free number. Kits purchased by phone will be mailed confidentially to purchasers.

The cost of the test kit has not yet been announced.

Protein that helps HIV infect blood cells found

An article published May 10 in the journal *Science* reports that Edward A. Berger and a team of AIDS researchers at the National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases have identified a specialized protein that is thought to be crucial for HIV to infect the white blood cells of the immune system. This discovery is the result of a decadelong search for the "co-factors" that scientists believe must exist for HIV to fuse with the specialized cells it invades.

The protein, named "fusin," is thought to be the first detected of a number of molecules that enable HIV to invade other immune system cells and cells in the brain and intestines.

According to Dr. Warner C. Greene, director of the Gladstone Institute of Virology at the University of California at San Francisco, the