



Surveillance of Health Care Workers with HIV/AIDS

Of the adults reported with AIDS in the United States through December 31, 1997, 20,242 had been employed in health care. These cases represented 5.1 percent of the 398,149 AIDS cases reported to CDC for whom occupational information was known (information on employment in the health care setting was missing for 234,851 reported AIDS cases).

The type of job is known for 19,148 (95 percent) of the 20,242 reported health care workers with AIDS. The specific occupations are as follows: 1,617 physicians, 106 surgeons, 4,509 nurses, 437 dental workers, 385 paramedics, 2,698 technicians, 951 therapists, and 4,256 health aides. The remainder are maintenance workers, administrative staff, etc. Overall, 75 percent of the health care workers with AIDS, including 1,280 physicians, 82 surgeons, 3,411 nurses, 351 dental workers, and 275 paramedics, are reported to have died.

CDC is aware of 54 health care workers in the United States who have been documented as having seroconverted to HIV following occupational exposures. Twenty-five have developed AIDS. These individuals who seroconverted include 19 laboratory workers (16 of whom were clinical laboratory workers), 22 nurses, 6 physicians, 2 surgical technicians, 1 dialysis technician, 1 respiratory therapist, 1 health aide, 1 embalmer/morgue technician, and 1 housekeeper/maintenance worker. The exposures were as follows: 46 had percutaneous (puncture/cut injury) exposure, 5 had mucocutaneous (mucous membrane and/or skin) exposure, 2 had both percutaneous and mucocutaneous exposure, and 1 had an unknown route of exposure. Forty-nine exposures were to HIV-infected blood, 3 to concentrated virus in a laboratory, 1 to visibly bloody fluid, and 1 to an unspecified fluid.

CDC is also aware of 132 other cases of HIV infection or AIDS among health care workers who have not reported other risk factors for HIV infection and who report a history of occupational exposure to blood, body fluids, or HIV-infected laboratory material, but for whom seroconversion after exposure was not documented. The number of these workers who acquired their infection through occupational exposures is unknown.

For more information...

CDC National Prevention Information Network:
P.O. Box 6003
Rockville, Maryland 20849-6003
1-800-458-5231

CDC National AIDS Hotline:
1-800-342-AIDS
Spanish: 1-800-344-SIDA
Deaf: 1-800-243-7889

Internet Home Page:
http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/hiv_aids/dhap.htm