2017.21.5.1.222

AIDS has already killed thousands of people all over the world; forced the spending of millions on research, and will certainly change sexual practices.

In this four-article series, *Cork Examiner* staffman, MARK HENNESSY, looks at the disease itself; those at risk, and the arguments over the use of condoms in Ireland.

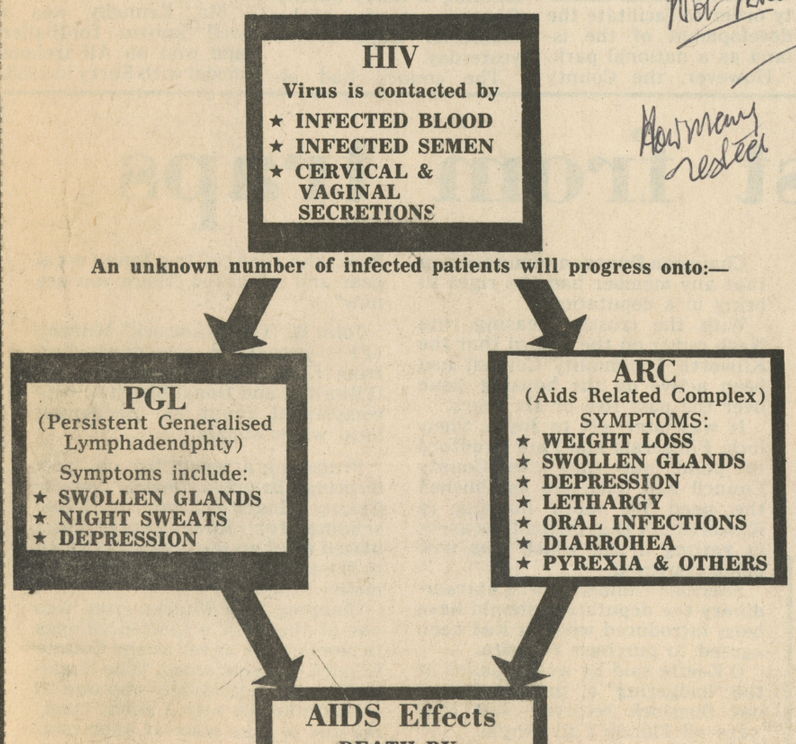
In Friday's article, we look at the financial impact on the world's health services, and our own and argue for increased spending on AIDS information

1987 THE YEAR OF THE AIDS



Dealing with a deadly enemy

AIDS VIRUS CYCLE



ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME, according to one Catholic priest, will achieve through fear what the Church has tried and failed to do over the last 2,000 years — an end to sexual promiscuity.

For Ireland, which still has one of the lowest incidence of the disease in the world, 1987 will be The Year of The AIDS.

Fifteen Irish men and women are now known to have AIDS — 8 of these have died. More importantly for the country, 527 people have the Human-Immuno Virus (HIV), which causes AIDS

On the most optimistic prediction, 30% of these will acquire AIDS within the next few years. The worst view of the future could see Ireland having to deal with hundreds of AIDS cases before 1990.

Much of the problem in getting the danger of AIDS across, say medical people is that an entire generation of people have grown up in an era where communicable diseases were thought to be defeated by science.

So what exactly is the disease, and where did it come from? The most respected present theory of the origins of AIDS is that it was brought into the African population when they ate the meat of the green vervet monkey.

But when did it come to surface there? Zaire, for instance, in West Africa, is reputed to now have one of the highest rates of AIDS in the world.

The Belgians, who ruled the country when it was the Congo until the mid-sixties, have done retrospective analysis of medical records of their countrymen and found no evidence to suggest that the disease existed then.

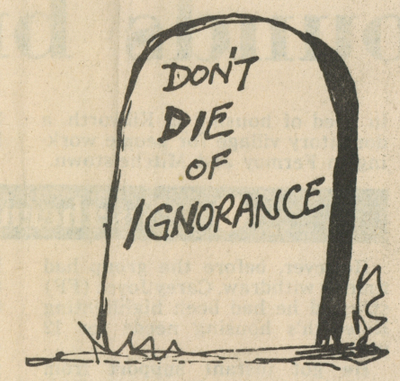
There are many other theories of

States diagnosed the first instances of AIDS among homosexual men in San Francisco.

The virus was termed LAV (Lymphadenopathy-Associated Virus) by the French. Confusingly, American scientists, led by the world-renowned authority on AIDS, Dr. Robert Gallo, a year later named the disease causing virus as HTLV III (Human T-Cell Lymphotrophic Virus, sub-species III).

Both sides stood on their honour, and a violent row followed between the two sides. Eventually, they agreed that LAV and HTLV III equalled HIV.

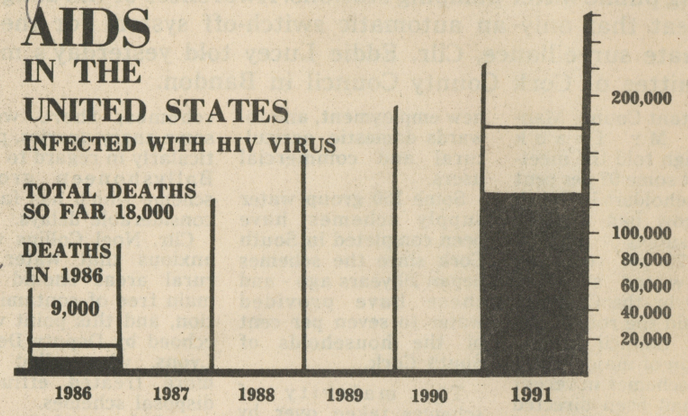
The target of HIV is the human



immune system which under normal circumstances protects the body from diseases and infections.

Patients with an acute HIV infection can sometimes suffer glandular fever, muscle pains, depression, rash and inflammation of the lymph nodes.

In particular, the virus attacks some of the white blood cells, called lymphocytes, which identify infec-



The major target of HIV is the T-4 Helper Cell, which acts as a vanguard within the immune system and signals the presence of infections and orchestrates the body's response.

"The antibodies possess little or no capacity to neutralise the virus — instead they serve most usefully as markers of infection," say the British Office of Health Economics.

AIDS is the most serious result of HIV infection and once the immune system has been weakened, or destroyed, the patient is unable to withstand, or fight against, even common infections.

In other words, the patient does not die of AIDS directly, but from recurrent attack by even minor diseases, which prior to AIDS the body would have had little, if any, trouble dealing with.

One chilling quotation from a recent British medical publication illustrates the scale of the problem facing the world.

"AIDS is almost invariably fatal. Data for Britain gathered by the Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre and the Communicable Disease (Scotland) Unit indicated that 92% of patients who had developed AIDS in, or before, 1982 had died by October 1985."

Though HIV can defeat the body's antibodies, it can not do that immediatedly and in 1985, scientists discovered a test which showed the presence of antibodies against the virus.

However, and this has vital ramifications for the Blood Transfusion Service, there is a latent period of between six to twelve weeks after infection with HIV and

however, data suggests that can be as long as 7 years."

This is important when calculating the rate of mortality of AIDS cases. Initially, it was thought that some 10 to 15% of these went on to develop the full disease.

"Now we could be talking about as many as 50% or even more going on to develop the full disease. And one German researcher is talking about a figure as high as 70%," went on Walsh.

Despite the doubt about the number going on to get AIDS, it is known that a large number of HIV cases will develop AIDS related complex (ARC) or persistent lymphadenopathy (PGL).

"Patients with ARC have a high risk of progressing to AIDS," says one authority, which can mean chronic diarrhoea, weight loss, oral infections, lethargy and pyrexia for ARC sufferers.

Many patients experiencing PGL remain well, and on present evidence, relatively few go on to more serious disease, medical authorities say at the moment.

Because of the destruction of the T-4 Helper Cells, the body is more vulnerable to diseases 'doing the rounds' or indeed to serious tumours, such as Kaposi's Sarcoma, a rare type of cancer that begins in the walls of blood vessels and pneumocystitis carinii.

Even more worrying, recent studies have shown that HIV can attack the brain. Headaches, depression seizures, progressive dementia are common in one quarter to one third of all AIDS victims.

Even more unusually, many of these symptoms can occur in pa-

● Cork County Council — Southern Committee

Urgent call to stem pollution

THERE was an urgent call yesterday for electronic monitoring for pollution in rivers feeding public water pumping stations. Awareness of the dangers of pollution was now so great that only an automatic switch-off system for the stations could provide adequate surveillance, Cllr. Eddie Lucey told yesterday's meeting of the Southern Committee of Cork County Council in Bandon.

Assistant County Manager Mr Frank Kavanagh told the meeting that some 97 per cent of householders in South Cork now had a piped water supply - and, of those, 70 per cent had their water supplied directly by the Council.

He said the role of the County Council in the provision of major water supply schemes in recent years had been directed towards the provision of an adequate water supply to all major centres of population - as well as the updating of a number of schemes which needed improvement.

The Council's schemes in recent years had been directed to a considerable degree towards meeting the needs of industrial users to improve opportunities for new employment, and towards domestic, agricultural and commercial users.

Some 150 group water supply schemes have been completed in South Cork since the schemes began 20 years ago - and these have provided water to seven per cent of the households of South Cork.

The majority of schemes taken over by the Council were provided as a result of extensions from the Council's watermain distribution network - and the Council is therefore responsible for water supply to 70 per cent of households in South Cork.

While the committee members were unanimous in their praise for the efficient extension of the schemes, there were some angry queries, particularly in regard to the Ballyshoneen group scheme which has faced considerable delays.

Cllr. Noel Collins was anxious that water in rural areas should remain free of contamination, and this point was echoed by Deputy Denis Lyons, who called for more treated effluent disposal schemes.

And he said it was "regrettable" that three per cent of the people of South Cork remained without piped water.

Cllr. George Osborne wanted the Council to take example from schemes in Britain - and he stressed in particular the potential of fish farming if harbours were kept pollution-free. Wexford Harbour, he pointed out, produced shellfish worth £1¾ million annually.

The chairman, Cllr Peter Callanan, believed that the quality of Cork's waterways remained "excellent" - well on a par with waterways in other parts of the country and abroad.

However, he believed that the extension of group sewerage schemes had been hamstrung by high costs.

Spiralling costs were emphasised by Manager Kavanagh as the main barrier to development, though he said the Council were trying to make the most of the EEC's FEOGA grants.

And Mr. Kavanagh stressed that the Council did not have any problems with contamination of water supplies.



Cllr. O'Keeffe: no pirate sympathies

Pirates are pirates are pirates . . .

A REPORT handed to a Cork County Council committee yesterday expressed appreciation to a West Cork pirate radio station for help during last week's blizzards.

The report to the Council's Southern Committee came from Senior Executive Engineer, Mr. Fred Lynch and raised some eyebrows when it expressed appreciation, in the same sentence, to both Cork Local Radio, whose staff have vocally opposed unlicensed stations, and pirates WKLR.

He suggested writing to local radio to express the Council's appreciation.

However, Fianna Fáil party colleague, Cllr. Batt O'Keeffe, commented: "And I hope we don't write to the pirate radio station unfortunately mentioned in this report from a statutory body."

● Kerry County Council

TD's also 'deserve' people's sympathy

IF PEOPLE realised the amount of work that TD's had to do they would have a lot more sympathy for them, Kerry County Council heard yesterday, reports Donal Hickey.

According to Senator Jimmy Deenihan, a Fine Gael candidate in North Kerry, members of the Oireachtas were not being paid enough for what they did.

The council rejected a motion calling on ministers and Oireachtas members not to accept recent salary increases in view of the economic state of the country.

Cllrs. James Courtney and P. J. Cronin, both Independents, proposing said that people at the top should lead by example and show practical patriotism.

A majority of members spoke against, however, with Cllr. John Blennerhassett, a former Senator, pointing out that Oireachtas members had to spend a lot of money out of their own pockets and many candidates ended up broke after elections.

Cllr. Michael Ahern (PD's) said the country had built up a public service far in excess of its requirements. Ex-Ministers should not receive any pensions until they reached retirement age like everybody else.

Cllr. Mick Long (FF): "is Dessie drawing his pension?".

The motion was defeated by 15 votes to ten.

In a further development of the Great Blasket controversy, the Council unanimously decided yesterday to ask the Office of Public Works to acquire the island for the State because of its historical and cultural significance.

The island is currently being offered for sale in the U.S.A. for a million dollars and a trust has been set up in West Kerry to lobby for its conversion into a national heritage centre.

American Mr. Taylor Collings owns 17 of the 24 holdings on the island, and the council's view was that the State should purchase the entire property.

Deputy Denis Foley proposed that the Council make a special amenity order to facilitate the development of the island as a national park.

However, the County Manager, Mr. Tom Collins, pointed out that, if passed, the proposal could lead to legal problems. On his suggestion, it was then agreed to make a request to the Office of Public Works.

On a relatively humorous level, a move to hang Taniste Dick Spring in one of Kerry's best known public buildings has been put off - until after the General Election.

The reprieve for the Labour leader has come magnanimously from Fianna Fail councillor, Breandan MacGearalt who feels that political temperatures are high enough these days.

However, plans to string up other dignitaries in the Kingdom are still very much alive.

"Remember I requested some time ago that all chairmen, past and present, be hung in this chamber," Cllr. P.J. Cronin told an amused meeting of Kerry County Council at the Ashe Memorial Hall, Tralee yesterday.

The council had already decided to hang the portrait, but the Fianna Fail party had a rescinding motion on yesterday's agenda.

County Secretary, Seamus Dooley, said that it had earlier been indicated that a portrait of Mr. Spring would be provided. If this were done, the Council would have to put it up in accordance with the previous decision.

At this stage, Cllr. Cronin made his statement about hanging all chairmen to which a laughing Cllr. Jackie Healy-Rea replied "there are a lot of people around this County who would like to see chairmen strung up."

The Council eventually agreed to defer the rescinding motion.

Mr. Colm Kennelly was congratulated at yesterday's meeting of Kerry County Council on his appointment as County Engineer in succession to Mr. Dan Kavanagh.

Mr. Kennelly was a well known footballer and won an All Ireland medal with Kerry in 1953.

Political greyhounds break fast from traps

POLITICAL greyhounds at yesterday's meeting of Cork County Council's Northern Committee in Mallow didn't even wait for the election hare to be released, reports Ray Ryan.

They broke fast from traps and showed plenty of stamina as they sprinted after the issues with verbal agility.

But as they chased the electoral scent, there was serious bumping at some of the bends between track experts Ned O'Keeffe, TD (FF) and Joe Sherlock (WP).

Both even ran the risk of being muzzled at one stage when Chairman Michael Donegan told them to go outside the door if they wanted to continue their argument.

It all began when O'Keeffe, introducing a Kilworth deputation, led by Jim Nash and Michael Dunne, pointed out it was 18 years since the last County Council houses were built in Kilworth.

The deputation presented a list of 21 families which they stated were in need of housing in Kilworth, a dormitory village for people working in Fermoy and Mitchelstown.

● Northern Committee

However, before the group had time to withdraw, Carey Joyce (FF) stressed he had been highlighting Kilworth's housing needs for 12 years.

He got instant support from Sherlock, who added that Dick Fitzgerald (FG) and others had been doing likewise.

He claimed the deputation had been brought into the meeting for the purpose of enhancing O'Keeffe's electoral prospects.

Uproar followed as Sherlock, who was on his feet, his voice raised in protest, directed some of his comments at the deputation.

Chairman Donegan reminded him that any member had the right to bring in a deputation.

With the crossfire easing, Jim Nash put it on the record that the Kilworth Community Council had been active on the housing issue over the past five or six years.

It was later left to Joyce, Sherlock, Fitzgerald and Paul Bradford to point out that the County Council had long ago established the need for more housing in Kilworth but that difficulties arose in getting a site which was now being conveyed.

Sherlock claimed it was extraordinary the deputation should have been introduced when it had been agreed to purchase the site.

O'Keeffe said he was appalled at the "badgering" of the deputation, but Sherlock retorted that they were all Fianna Fail people.

"Who does he think he is coddling" remarked Sherlock who was lock, who changed to a lower vocal gear and remarked "there you are now".

John B. "The Shamrock" Murphy (FF) introduced the deputation from Knocknagree, led by Frank O'Riordan and Donal Sheehan who complained about an inadequate local water supply.

Promising a report for the next meeting, Brendan Devlin, Deputy County Engineer, said a water scheme for Knocknagree was placed third on the Council's priority list and was awaiting the Departments sanction.

Claiming that Knocknagree was one of the most neglected villages in North Cork as far as the County Council was concerned, "The Shamrock" said a campaign was due to escalate locally with a public meeting due to take place at noon next Sunday.

Other councillors also detected

FIND THE

Travellers impasse

RESIDENTS of a Co. Cork district yesterday objected to County Council plans to house a travelling couple and their nine children in a

Committee in Mallow by Cllr. Jerry Sheedy who stressed he had no objection to itinerants being housed.

The deputation stres-