

file



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
RICHMOND HOUSE
79 WHITEHALL
LONDON SW1A 2NS
TELEPHONE 01 210 3000
210

Your reference:
Our reference:

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To: Regional General Managers
Regional Medical Officers
District General Managers
District Medical Officers
General Managers, Special Health Authorities
Chief Executives of: Non-Metropolitan County Councils
Metropolitan District Councils
Non-Metropolitan District Councils
London Boroughs

1 December 1988

Dear Sir/Madam

REPORT OF WORKING GROUP ON SHORT-TERM PREDICTIONS OF HIV INFECTION AND AIDS IN ENGLAND AND WALES (COX REPORT)

You were yesterday sent a copy of the Report of the Working Group on short-term predictions of HIV infection and AIDS in England and Wales, chaired by Sir David Cox. I am now able to send you a copy of the press release issued at the time the report was published, which sets out the Government's response.

The report contains a number of important conclusions about the future spread of the disease in England and Wales. We believe their findings will be very helpful in service and resource planning. I would be grateful if you could make the report available to your colleagues who are concerned with this issue.

Further copies of the report may be obtained from HMSO Bookshops at a cost of £6.50 per copy.

Yours faithfully,

Simon Lawton Smith

S H LAWTON SMITH
AIDS Unit

M.R.H.A. - ADMIN.	
RCVD. - 3 DEC 1988	
FOR ACTION BY	R.M.O.
COPIES SENT TO:-	

**PRESS
RELEASE**

Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London SW1A 2NS

Telephone 01-210 5963

88/433

30 November 1988

COX REPORT ON PREDICTIONS ON AIDS PUBLISHED

David Mellor, Minister for Health, today announced the publication of the report of a Working Group: Short term prediction of HIV infection and AIDS in England and Wales. In answer to a Written Parliamentary Question from Robert Key (MP for Salisbury), Mr Mellor said:

" We are most grateful to Sir David Cox and members of the Working Group for their work in preparing this report. A copy has been placed in the Library of the House.

" The main conclusions of the report are:

- between 10,000 and 30,000 AIDS cases are likely to be diagnosed between 1987 and 1992; and the "recommended basis for planning" is 13,000 cases;
- by the end of 1992 between 7,500 and 17,000 persons are expected to have died from AIDS;
- assuming that no treatment emerges which significantly prolongs the life of people with AIDS, the number of living people with AIDS at a particular point in time is expected to rise from the present level of about 1,350 to a recommended basis for planning of over 5,000 by the end of 1992;
- the figures given above relate only to cases expected to be reported to the Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre under current conditions. Adjustments for under-reporting would increase them by at least 20%.
- the rate of increase in new AIDS cases is slowing probably as a result of changes in behaviour of the homosexual community which occurred from about the mid-1980's, but the report stresses that "it would be a gross error to regard even the lower predictions as grounds for complacency". This, they say, is particularly so in view of the significant number of heterosexuals thought to be infected and the potential for spread within the general population. The Report points out that any reversal of the changes which have led to the slowing down of the spread amongst homosexual men could lead to a further phase of rapid growth.

[MORE]

- by the end of 1987 between 20,000 and 50,000 persons were infected with HIV in England and Wales of whom some 13,000 to 30,000 were probably homosexual men. Between 2,000 and 5,500 are thought to have been infected through heterosexual contact, but assuming that most injecting drug misusers and haemophiliacs are heterosexual, the total pool of infected heterosexuals could be between 6,000 and 17,000;

- the Group made no predictions about future numbers of HIV infections because these depend on unforeseeable changes in behaviour patterns.

" The Government accepts the figures in the report as a basis for future planning.

" We accept the report's recommendations for updating its predictions and for improving the present data collection arrangements. We are taking forward with the Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre arrangements for preparing annual updates of the projections for England and Wales. In Scotland similar annual updates of the predictions of the Tayler Report of 1987 will be undertaken in conjunction with the Communicable Diseases (Scotland) Unit.

" The recommendations for further research studies to improve epidemiological information, notably for large scale HIV surveillance based on anonymous testing, will be followed through as part of the action to improve HIV surveillance announced by my rt hon learned Friend last week.

" On the recommendations for improving the reporting systems for cases of HIV and AIDS we are asking Dr Joe Smith, Director of the Public Health Laboratory Service, to make proposals to the Chief Medical Officers on ways of reducing to a minimum the under-reporting of HIV infection and AIDS."

[END]