

HHS NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
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The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), in conjunction with the National Cancer Institute awarded contracts on September 30 to five institutions to study the epidemiology of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) in homosexual men. Total first year funding for the four-year project will be \$3,782,134, part of a \$12 million FY 83 supplemental appropriation.

Participating institutions are the School of Public Health, University of California at Los Angeles; the School of Public Health, University of California at Berkeley; Howard Brown Memorial Clinic, Chicago; Graduate School of Public Health, University of Pittsburgh; and The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.

AIDS is a complex disease characterized by defects in natural immunity, which result in a variety of serious illnesses. More than 2,200 cases of AIDS have been reported, primarily among homosexual or bisexual men with multiple sex partners, intravenous drug abusers, Haitians recently arrived in the United States, and hemophiliacs. A small number of cases have also developed in persons whose only apparent source of disease has been through blood transfusions.

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Although the cause of AIDS is unknown, scientists think that it may be due to an agent transmitted by sexual contact and perhaps by transfer of body fluids such as blood. A large epidemiologic study will help define the factors that predispose homosexuals and others to AIDS, as well as provide materials that can be used to test theories about possible causes.

All five contracts call for long-term follow-up of large numbers of currently healthy homosexual males at risk of developing AIDS. Information obtained by regular physical examinations, collection of specimens of blood and other body fluids, and detailed histories will be assembled in a national repository to be coordinated by the NIAID. The repository will provide scientists throughout the country with data and specimens that can be used in future studies on AIDS.

The institutions participating in the study are located in geographic areas that, currently, represent a wide range of risk for AIDS.

Both California contractors are in areas reporting relatively high numbers of AIDS cases and where many new cases are likely to occur. The study at the UCLA School of Public Health will be coordinated by Dr. Roger Detels, head of the division of epidemiology and dean of the School. Dr. Warren Winkelstein, professor of epidemiology, will head the the study at the University of California at Berkeley.

The third contractor is the Howard Brown Memorial Clinic in Chicago, one of the largest sexually transmitted diseases clinic in the Nation. The number of AIDS cases in Chicago has been relatively low, but seems to be increasing. Principal investigators for the study, which will be done in cooperation with Northwestern University Medical School, are Dr. David

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Ostrow, research director of the Clinic and assistant professor of psychiatry and behavior at Northwestern, and Dr. John P. Phair, professor of medicine and chief of the section of infectious diseases at Northwestern University Medical School.

The remaining contractors are in cities that presently have low incidences of AIDS. At the University of Pittsburgh, scientists headed by Dr. Charles R. Rinaldo, Jr., assistant professor of clinical pathology and assistant director of clinical microbiology, will screen several thousand male homosexuals. Those identified as most likely at risk for AIDS will be evaluated more extensively over a 30-month period.

In Baltimore, at the Johns Hopkins University, Dr. B. Frank Polk, an internist trained in infectious diseases and epidemiology, will head a similar study recruiting approximately 1,000 male homosexuals for long-term follow-up.

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