

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 19, 1982

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Dr. Edward N. Brandt Jr., assistant secretary for health, today directed agencies of the Public Health Service to step up activities to combat Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, a little-understood syndrome afflicting increasing numbers of people in the United States.

Recently three hemophilia patients were reported to have developed Pneumocystis carinii, a rare lung disease that may be linked to Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. AIDS complicated by such medical problems as Kaposi's sarcoma and opportunistic infections has recently been reported in several population groups: homosexual men, recent Haitian entrants and intravenous drug abusers.

To supplement PHS' ongoing AIDS activities in epidemiologic surveillance, laboratory study and clinical investigation, Dr. Brandt issued the following instructions:

1. The Centers for Disease Control will continue its work with the National Hemophilia Foundation, Hemophilia Treatment Centers and others to determine if other cases of AIDS have occurred or are occurring in patients with hemophilia;
2. CDC and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute of the National Institutes of Health will work jointly to develop a plan for testing patients with hemophilia to develop data relating to the immune system;

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3. The Food and Drug Administration's Advisory Panel on Blood Products will review all possible practical techniques which might decrease or eliminate infectious risks from Factor VIII, the blood product most commonly used to treat hemophilia A, and report the outcome of their deliberations to him;

4. The National Cancer Institute will act as expeditiously as possible to review and fund promising research projects related to AIDS (\$2,205,000 has been set aside for FY 83);

5. The PHS will continue to involve representatives of all affected groups in future committee meetings on AIDS to ensure that the broadest knowledge is available.

"The lung infection in three patients with hemophilia is disturbing," Dr. Brandt stated. "At this time, however, we can't be sure there is a connection between blood products used by these patients and AIDS. Patients with hemophilia should continue to rely on the treatment prescribed by their doctors."

After PHS learned of the three cases, it called an open meeting July 27 to consider the ramifications of the problem. In addition to PHS agencies, the National Hemophilia Foundation, the American Red Cross, various blood banking organizations, National Gay Task Force, New York City Health Department, and the New York Inter-Hospital Study Group on the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome and Kaposi's Sarcoma attended the meeting. The groups' discussion formed the basis for a series of recommendations to the PHS for further investigation. Today's instructions to PHS agencies were issued in response to those recommendations, Dr. Brandt said.

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