

Wednesday, July 11, 1990

Women's AIDS death rate grows

CHICAGO (AP) — AIDS has become the leading killer of young African-American women in New York state and New Jersey, and probably will be the fifth leading cause of death among all U.S. women of childbearing age by next year, scientists say.

Because women who have the virus are the major source of infection for infants, the trends portend disastrous consequences for thousands of children, say researchers at the federal Centers for Disease Control.

"As the number of pediatric cases increases the medical and social costs will be staggering," the researchers said in today's *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

In monetary terms alone, babies infected with the AIDS virus cost the taxpayer-funded Medicaid system \$18,000 to \$42,000 a year, they

noted. Among women ages 15 to 44, deaths from AIDS soared from 18 in 1980 to 1,430 in 1988, the most recent year for which statistics are available, the researchers said.

The death rate quadrupled between 1985 and 1988, when AIDS deaths represented 3 percent of all mortality for women in that age group, the researchers said.

Among black women ages 15 to 44, AIDS was the leading cause of death in New York and New Jersey, said lead author Susan Y. Chu, a CDC epidemiologist. The disease killed 40.7 per 100,000 in New Jersey and 29.5 per 100,000 in New York in 1987, the most recent year for which regional statistics are available, the researchers said.

"That to me is remarkable, because it exceeds the rates of heart

disease and cancer, as well as accidents," she said in a telephone interview from Atlanta.

Three-quarters of women with AIDS-virus infections get them from using intravenous drugs or having sex with intravenous drug users, Chu said. Since it typically takes 10 years after infection for AIDS to develop, current statistics represent infections from years ago, she said.

In 1989, there were 2,825 new cases of AIDS among women of reproductive age, the researchers said.

Dr. Howard Minkoff, professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the State University of New York Health Science Center at Brooklyn, called the findings "overwhelming, worrisome and troubling."

Even more troubling, he said in a telephone interview Tuesday, is the attitude of white, middle-class

Americans whose reaction to the reports is, "It's still not us."

"The pocketbook issues are a ready there for all of us," said Minkoff, who works with pregnant women infected with the AIDS virus and says 2,000 such women will be infected babies in the United States this year. "The human concern should assume a higher priority than the financial."

The report in Wednesday's *JAMA* elaborates on findings Chu released in November indicating AIDS has become the eighth leading cause of death among U.S. reproductive women, ahead of diabetes, influenza and pneumonia.

"What happened to men with AIDS in 1984 and 1985 is happening to women now," Chu said at the time. "And it's getting worse."

NASA denies use of faulty shuttle parts

WASHINGTON (AP) — A top NASA official on Tuesday denied an assertion by Sen. Albert Gore Jr. that critical plumbing connections were installed on two space shuttles even though the parts had failed a leakage test.

Gore, a Tennessee Democrat, said two umbilicals, which carry supercold hydrogen rocket fuel onto the spacecraft, were among seven plumbing fixtures that failed initial tests but were tested a second time, using a different method, and passed.

Gore said the umbilicals had leaked when tested with liquid nitrogen and connected to a simulated spacecraft part.

NASA spaceflight director William Lenoir said that the umbilicals had not failed and that the second round of tests was normal.

Meanwhile, at a NASA news conference, Hubble Space Telescope experts said they had moved closer to determining which of two mirrors on the spacecraft had been cut to the wrong pre-

scription.

"All of the evidence is beginning to point toward the primary mirror and not the secondary mirror," Ed Weiler, chief project scientist for the Hubble, said.

The telescope has two mirrors, a 94-inch primary and a 12-inch secondary, that are suspects in the focusing flaw that has handicapped Hubble. Experts are working to determine which mirror was ground wrong in order to correct optics on replacement instruments that will be installed in the future.

Weiler said that pictures taken with a faint object camera showed that the misfocused light has no coma, or smearlike streak. This suggests, he said, that the focus flaw is in the primary mirror, the large reflector that first captures light in the telescope.

If the primary mirror is at fault, Weiler said, it will be easier to correct than if the problem was in the secondary mirror. The secondary mirror re-

fects light from the primary mirror into the telescope's instruments.

At the Senate hearing, Lenoir said that the space shuttle umbilicals were first tested against what is called a slave unit, a test machine that simulates where the umbilicals attach to the space shuttle orbiter.

"The slave unit is not flight hardware, therefore it is more likely to be the source of a leak than is the flight hardware," Lenoir said.

He denied that the test was redesigned in order to assure that the umbilicals would pass a leakage test.

When leaks were detected in the first test, Lenoir said, the slave unit was removed and a blank plate was substituted. This was done, he said, because it was assumed the leak was from the slave unit and not from the umbilical. In tests using the blank plate, the NASA official said, the umbilicals passed.

C-SPAN

(Continued from page 1)

watch a C-SPAN broadcast and analyze how the speaker portrays his organization.

Another topic to be discussed is what kind of video clips are best for large and small classes, he said.

"That's why I'm going to the seminar, to find out how to do this effectively," he said.

The seminar includes professional discussions and workshops, a live nationally televised viewer call-in program, and a reception at the national press club.

While in Washington, D.C., Ritter also intends to interview former Reagan speechwriter Landon Pavlin.

He said he hopes to talk with other former speechwriters for use in a separate research project on Reagan as a political communicator.

The project will be used for teaching and in a series of publications on Reagan as an orator, he said.

"No president has ever used speech writers as effectively as Reagan," Ritter said. "He had six full-time writers but always made the text his own."

Summit

(Continued from page 1)

George Kupp, Houston Mayor Kathryn Whitmore and their spouses.

During a pre-dinner toast, Bush spoke about all the changes in the world since the Summit Seven gathered in Paris last year.

"We have witnessed another revolution ... and thrilled at the new breeze that's swept the globe from Central Europe to Central America, fanning the sparks of freedom and lighting the torch of democratic fer-

vor in unexpected corners of the world," the President said.

Final sessions of the economic summit are this morning with much of the talk predicted to center around environmental issues. Bush is expected to try to avoid any definite decisions on reducing pollutants and preserving tropical rain forests in South America, even though many expect Europe's leaders to lobby diligently.

Bush will conclude the summit today at 1 p.m. by delivering the final communique — traditionally, a positive declaration papering over any differences among the countries.

Human rights group reports violence, abuse

LONDON (AP) — Using torture, murder and mass arrests, governments trampled the human rights of tens of thousands of people in 1989 to suppress conflicts stemming from ethnic or nationalist tensions, Amnesty International said.

Despite democratic revolutions in Eastern Europe, reform in South Africa and signs of change in other African countries, Amnesty's annual world survey of human rights painted a grim picture.

Cases cited in the human rights group's 138-country report ranged from children tortured in Iraq to a Spaniard sentenced for burning the flag; from alleged racial bias in U.S. capital punishment to the jailing of Malawi's only neurosurgeon for criticizing the president; from death squads in El Salvador to draft refusers in Western Europe.

The theme of this year's report was "the suppression of ethnic and nationalist groups," which Amnesty said has often "served to entrench

bitter conflicts, dimmed prospects for dialogue and added to the toll of suffering and death."

The survey saw this pattern in countries including Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Sri Lanka, India, Burma, Indonesia, the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Tibet, Chad, Mauritania, Israel, Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Bulgaria, Guatemala and Brazil.

"Around the world, particularly where the tensions erupted into violence, tens of thousands of people became victims of security operations resulting in 'disappearances' and extrajudicial executions," the report said.

It continued, "The conflicts ranged from local disputes over the cultural rights of distinctive ethnic groups through to full-scale confrontation over demands for autonomy or secession."

The demands were often non-violent, but in many instances, violent attacks or armed insurgency were dominant features, the report said.

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