

	<u>1992</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>1994</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>
Men having sex with men	338	217	223	183	159	147
Men having sex with men/ injection drug users	16	11	12	26	26	14
Injection Drug Users	83	143	191	265	312	223
Heterosexual	50	35	47	65	84	77
Other	30	33	44	70	62	25
Unknown	271	264	323	81	71	74
TOTAL	788	706	840	690	714	560

Source: BC Ministry of Health and Ministry Responsible for Seniors, *BC's Framework for Action on HIV/AIDS* (Victoria, BC: 1998), p.4

The crisis linking illicit use of injection drugs to HIV appears to have peaked in 1996, although the number of cases since then clearly remains significant. During the first six months of 1998, the last period for which statistics are currently available, there were 81 newly diagnosed cases of HIV among injection drug users (IDUs).⁶ It is also worth noting that in 1997 almost half (44.5%) of newly diagnosed HIV cases were among IDUs. Thus, there continues to exist a strong correlation between AIDS and the illicit use of injection drugs. Beyond the statistics noted above, illicit IDUs and those working with them point to link between injection drug use and the sex trade. An undefined number of heroin and or cocaine addicts work in the sex trade to support their habit. This, combined with unprotected sex on the part of HIV infected IDUs, means the transmission of HIV to the sexual partners of IDUs or to their 'johns' who may not be illicit drug users.⁷

These cases of HIV among IDUs stem from the sharing of contaminated needles. Needle sharing not only results in the proliferation of HIV, but of other infectious diseases