

RECOMMENDATION

- 31. This Committee recommends that all HIV-antibody testing be accompanied by appropriate guarantees of confidentiality.¹²⁴**

In the area of research, the Committee recognizes the importance of information on levels of HIV infection in the population, particularly among certain sub-populations such as sex-trade workers, injection drug users, street people and prison populations. Such information is necessary in order to develop appropriate education and prevention programs to limit the spread of the virus.

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- 32. The Committee supports the use of anonymous non-linked epidemiological surveys in AIDS research.¹²⁵**

The Canadian Aids Society (CAS) told the Ad Hoc Committee on AIDS that it believes that the sheer volume of information on treatments for AIDS and HIV infection, and the rapid changes in the information, combined with the lack of a suitable vehicle to provide physicians with access to information, are making it difficult for persons with AIDS to receive the best available medical care.¹²⁶ A national Treatment Registry on AIDS and HIV, to make available up-to-the-minute information about new drugs and emerging therapies and to ensure that treatment information is accessible to physicians, was recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee. In June 1990, the National Health and Welfare Minister announced an information system of the type recommended with initial funding of \$990,000.¹²⁷ Recent reports in the media of possible delays in this project are of grave concern to Committee members.

The information system is expected to remedy the problem of treatment information, at least for those doctors who see large numbers of AIDS and HIV-infected patients. Unfortunately, a relatively small number of physicians are treating the largest percentage of the AIDS patients. Dr. Berger estimates, for example, that 17 doctors probably treat over 40% of all HIV-infected patients in Ontario. It is estimated that 17 physicians in the downtown Toronto HIV Primary Care Physicians Group, of which Dr. Berger is a member, care for about 3,000 people. Media reports suggest that the

¹²⁴ Ad Hoc Committee on AIDS, p. 42.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

¹²⁷ Speaking Notes for The Honourable Perrin Beatty, Minister of National Health and Welfare, 81st Annual Conference of the Canadian Public Health Association, Toronto, June 28, p. 8.