



DIRECTORATE
OF HEALTH

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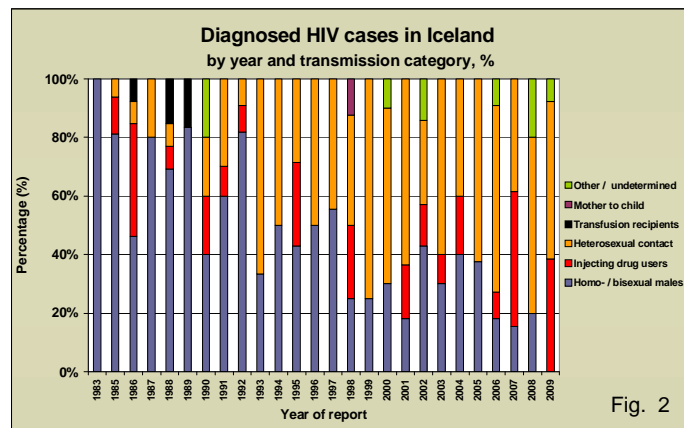
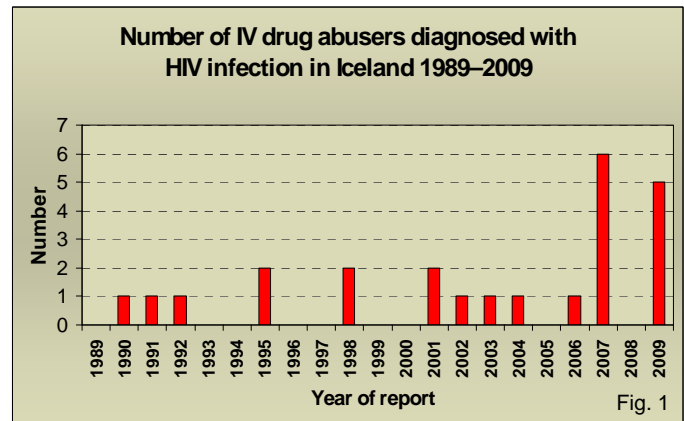
STILL MORE IV DRUG ABUSERS DIAGNOSED WITH HIV INFECTION

So far this year, 13 patients have been diagnosed with HIV infection in Iceland, three men and ten women. One of the women was diagnosed with AIDS, the final stage of the disease, and one man died from the disease this year (2009). Of those diagnosed as HIV positive, six were Icelandic citizens, four women aged 17–48 years and two men, 21–30 years of age. All the women and one of the men were intravenous drug abusers (fig. 1). The other eight patients diagnosed with HIV infection are foreigners and are assumed to have been infected by heterosexual contact.

It is of special concern that most of the Icelanders diagnosed during the year are IV drug abusers. For the past two decades, relatively few IV drug abusers have been diagnosed with HIV infection in this country until two years ago, in 2007, when six patients in this risk category were diagnosed with the disease (fig. 2). At that time it was noted in *Epi-Ice* that unusually many of the HIV cases were related to IV drug abuse and that an outbreak could be imminent.

HIV infection in 2007 and 2009

The Department of Virology at Landspítali University Hospital (LUH) investigated the HIV strains from the patients diagnosed in 2007. The results showed that the same viral strain was only de-



tected in two of the patients with history of IV drug abuse, an indication that an outbreak among drug abusers was not ongoing that year. Since then, HIV infection has not been diagnosed in this category of patients until 2009, when five patients were diagnosed with the infection.

Doctors and nurses of the LUH Department of Infectious Diseases are of the opinion that there may be a connection between the patients diagnosed in 2009 and those who were diagnosed in 2007. These health care workers have also pointed out that ruthlessness and disrespect among

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drug abusers for their own welfare and that of others has been more prominent than ever before.

In Iceland there has been good access to syringes and needles which can be bought very cheaply. In spite of preventive education about the danger of HIV infection asso-

ciated with IV drug abuse, the addiction is a more powerful driving force than reason. There is no cure for HIV infection and it can only be controlled with a lifelong and complicated drug therapy which is almost impossible to take care of in a state of addiction.

THE PANDEMIC INFLUENZA IN AUTUMN 2009

There has been a sharp decrease in the number of cases diagnosed with influenza-like illness (ILI) according to electronic reporting by the Icelandic health care service. At the same time, hospitalisations related to ILI have become rare.

The number of samples analysed for respiratory infections at the Department of Virology at Landspítali University Hospital has gone down. In the past 2–3 weeks, approx. 20 samples were received each week and 1–2 persons diagnosed weekly with swine influenza (A(H1N1)v 2009).

No one has yet been diagnosed with annual influenza. Other sporadic virus infections diagnosed in the past weeks were caused by parainfluenza-2, enterovirus and adenovirus.

In spite of these delays the vaccinations themselves have been carried out successfully and on 15 December, 76.842 individuals had been vaccinated according to the Central Vaccination Data Base. It is estimated that the extent of the vaccinations has contributed to the prevention of a more widespread swine influenza in Iceland.

On 4 December 2009, the Icelandic Medicines Control Agency had received 65 notifications of incidents related to the vaccination. Most of the incidents were mild, although one person suffered a severe allergic reaction shortly after being vaccinated. The number of incidents reported in Iceland is similar to reports from other countries where tens of millions of people have been vaccinated with the same vaccine. Therefore the rate of severe adverse effects due to this vaccine is estimated to be similar to that of any vaccination.

Vaccinations against swine influenza

On 15 December 2009, 112.500 doses of swine influenza vaccine (Pandemrix®) had been imported to the country. Considerable delays in the delivery of the vaccine were experienced, however, because of a smaller production capacity than originally expected.

Prospects

All influenza pandemics have come in waves. If no measures are taken another wave of the swine influenza can be expected later this winter or next autumn. To prevent that from happening, the emphasis is on vaccinating as many people as possible in the coming months.

Age group (years)	Number	Percent (%)
<1	533	0,7
1–9,9	7.154	9,3
10–19,9	6.077	7,9
20–49,9	28.238	36,7
50–69,9	21.908	28,5
≥70	12.932	16,8
Alls	76.842	100

Age distribution of those vaccinated