



DIRECTORATE
OF HEALTH

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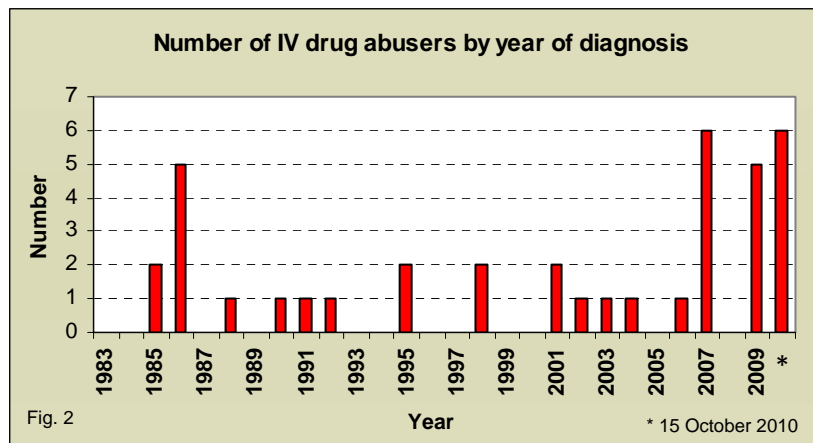
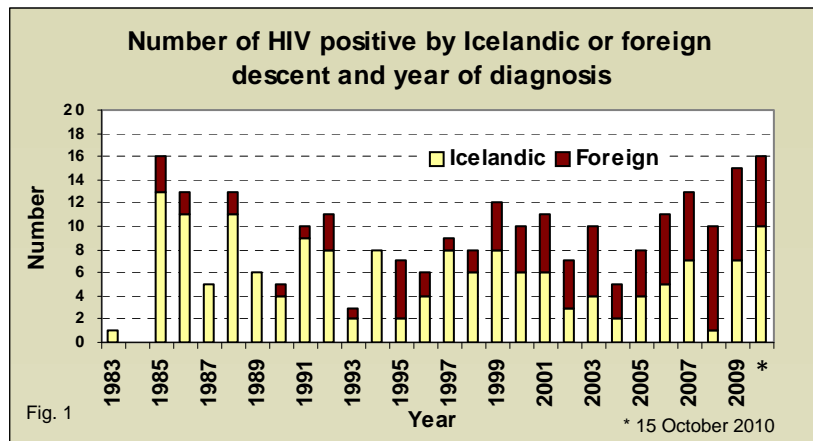
HIV ON THE INCREASE AMONG INTRAVENOUS DRUG ABUSERS

During the first nine months of this year 16 patients have been diagnosed with HIV infection in Iceland, which is more than usual. As before, a substantial part of those diagnosed are foreigners and the majority of them come from countries where HIV and AIDS is widespread (Fig 1). Of those diagnosed until 15 October this year, six are intravenous drug abusers (IVDU), six are heterosexuals, and four are homosexuals.

The main reason for this increase in the number of HIV infected is the increase

among IVDU and this has been the trend for the last four years. From the beginning of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Iceland HIV infection among IVDU has been relatively rare (Fig 2). It is extremely difficult to reach this risk group with advice and treatment options. Previously it has been pointed out that that ruthlessness and disrespect among drug abusers for their own welfare and that of others is prevalent ([EPI-ICE. Vol. 5. Issue 12. December 2009](#)).

HIV infection reduces the quality of life of those who are infected and is very costly



It is assumed that the increase in diagnosed cases of chlamydia is due to improved diagnostic methods rather than a real increase in chlamydial infection.

for the society. Availability of clean needles and syringes is important. In Iceland the access has been easy in drug stores that sell these tools at a low price. Also, nurses in the Health House of the Reykjavik Division of

the Red Cross distribute needles and syringes to addicts for free.

See more information on [statistics regarding HIV/AIDS](#).

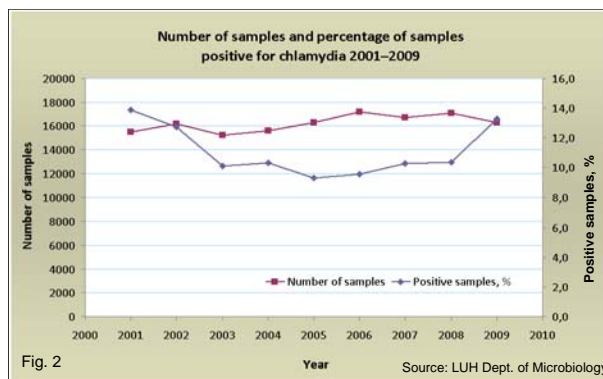
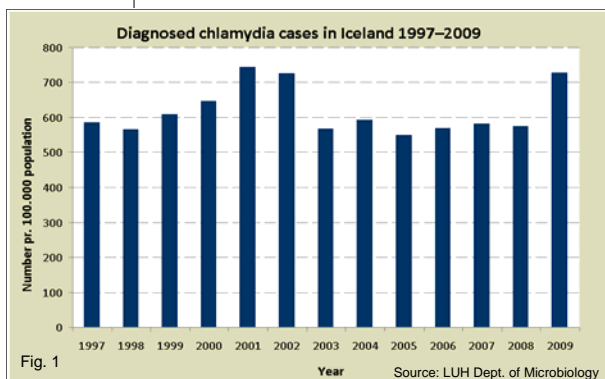
Haraldur Briem

CHLAMYDIAL INFECTION IN ICELAND IN 2009

In 2009, the number of diagnosed cases of chlamydia increased considerably (Fig 1). However, the number of samples submitted for chlamydia investigation at the Department of Microbiology of the Landspítali University Hospital (LUH) did not increase while the proportion of positive samples rose as compared with previous years (fig. 2).

mon in women 15–19 years of age but most of the men are 20–24 years of age. Chlamydial infections are very rare in both women and men younger than 15 years of age and older than 40 years of age.

The main symptoms of chlamydial infection are burning on urination and mucopurulent discharge from the genitalia but a large pro-



This increase was evident and sustained from May 2009, at which point a new method for the diagnosis of *Chlamydia trachomatis* was introduced at the LUH Department of Microbiology.

According to test results, the new method is more sensitive than the method previously used¹. It is therefore assumed that the increase in the number of diagnosed cases of chlamydia is due to improvement in diagnostic methods rather than a real increase in chlamydial infection in the community. The number of positive samples in May this year is similar to the number in May last year.

Chlamydial infection is diagnosed more frequently in women than men and they are consistently younger than men when they become infected. The infection is most com-

portion of those infected does not have any symptoms. The infection may cause salpingitis causing infertility among women. Epididymitis in men causing infertility is a known but rare side effect. When a sexually transmitted disease is suspected it is important to visit a physician. Diagnosis of chlamydial infection is easy to perform by taking samples from urine or the genital organs for laboratory investigation.

Gudrun Sigmundsdottir

1 Chernesky M, Jang D, Luinstra K, Chong S, Smieja M, Cai W, et al. 2004. High analytical sensitivity and low rates of inhibition may contribute to detection of *Chlamydia trachomatis* in significantly more women by the APTIMA Combo 2 Assay. J Clin Microbiol; 44:400-405.