



DIRECTORATE
OF HEALTH

Chief Epidemiologist for Iceland

EPI-ICE

Volume 3. Issue 3. March 2007.

CONTENTS:

HIV infection and AIDS in Iceland **p. 1**

Influenza in the winter of 2007 **p. 2**

Editorial Board

Dr H. Briem,
Chief Epidemiologist
Ms A. St. Atladottir
Ms B. Laxdal
Ms G. Sigmundsdottir
Ms S. Hauksdottir
Mr TH. Gudnason

Editor

Ms J. M. Gudnadottir

DIRECTORATE OF HEALTH
CHIEF EPIDEMIOLOGIST
FOR ICELAND

Austurströnd 5
170 Seltjarnarnes
Tel: +354 510 1900
Fax: +354 510 1920

E-mail: mottaka@landlaeknir.is
Website: www.landlaeknir.is

The contents of this newsletter may be reproduced provided that the source is quoted.

HIV INFECTION AND AIDS IN ICELAND. A TICKING TIME BOMB?

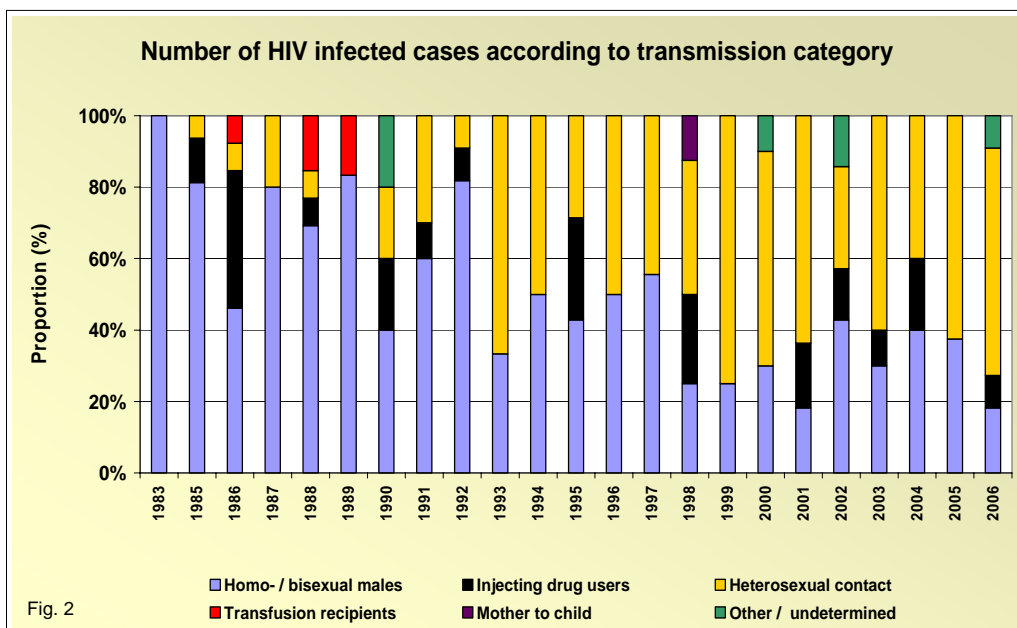
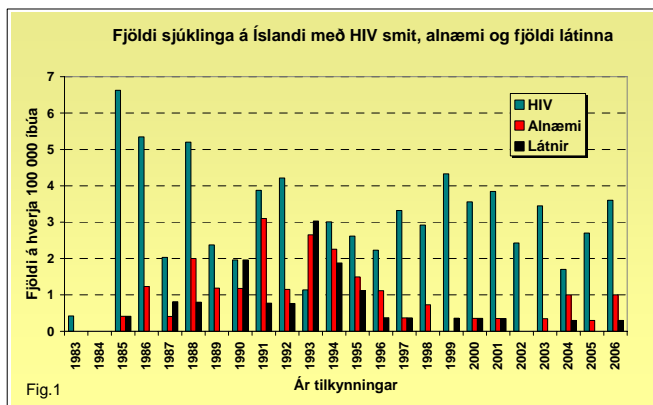
In 2006 eleven patients were diagnosed as HIV positive, eight men and three women. Two men and one woman were diagnosed with AIDS that year and one male died from the disease.

These figures indicate that HIV/AIDS is still a rare disease in Iceland although it has become endemic (fig. 1). A look at the groups engaging in risk behaviour (fig. 2) reveals that the proportion of heterosexuals getting infected is increasing year by year. It must be kept in mind that half of those diagnosed are foreign nationals (EPI-ICE, Nov. 2006) and many of these come from regions where HIV infection is widespread among heterosexuals.

HIV infection among drug addicts using intravenous needles has been rare in Iceland, contrary to what applies to hepatitis C, which is also a blood-transmitted dis-

ease. With respect to the closing months of 2006 and the first two months of 2007 certain signs of danger are looming. Even though the number of IV drug abusers who have tested positive for HIV recently is not high (fig. 3) it is worth noting that three cases have been diagnosed in a short span of time, all of whom are interrelated, a fact indicating that the infection has been

(Continued on page 2)



Three cases of HIV have been diagnosed in a short span of time, all of them interrelated, a fact indicating transmission by means of contaminated syringes and needles.

transmitted by means of contaminated syringes and intravenous needles.

Ever since the HIV/AIDS outbreak reached Iceland, in the beginning of the nineteen-eighties, a potential outbreak among drug users has been a matter of special concern. In the opinion of many people, and with reference to the Finish experience, it is only a question of

time when it extends to this particular risk group. One way of preventing the spread of HIV infection among drug abusers is to facilitate their access to clean syringes and needles as much as to condoms. Up until now

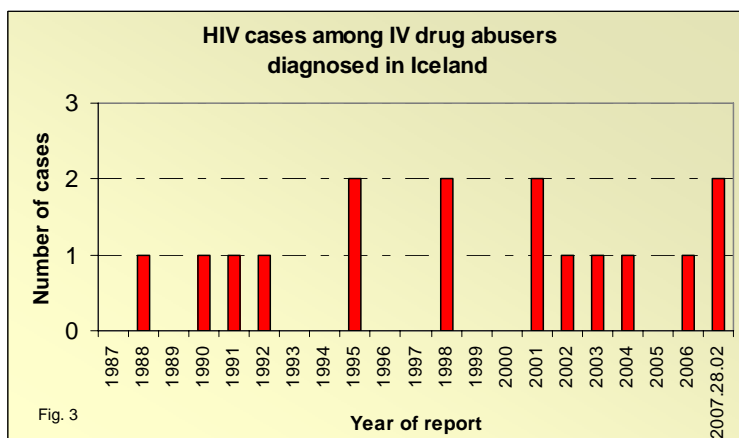


Fig. 3

there has not been consent on such a strategy, but a revision of the policy on easy access to clean needles and syringes may be called for in view of current events.

INFLUENZA IN THE WINTER OF 2007

This season's influenza outbreak seems to have subsided. It broke out several weeks earlier this year than the year before, as is clearly seen in figures on house calls to patients with influenza-like symptoms in the capital area. The number of confirmed cases of influenza, diagnosed at the Department of Virology of the Landspítali University Hos-

pital, corresponds to the number of house calls. According to information from the Department of Virology, the most common influenza strains so far have been A H3N2 viruses while strains A H1N1 have been gaining ground in the past few weeks. Influenza viruses of strain B have been practically non-existent this season.

In 2006 eleven patients were diagnosed as HIV positive, eight men and three women.

