MINISTRY OF HEALTH
SINGAPORE

College of Medicine Building, 16 College Road, Singapore 169854
Tel: 6325 9220 Fax: 62241677 URL:www.moh.gov.sg
Internet E- mail:MOH_INFO@MOH.GOV.SG

MOH PRESS RELEASE

UPDATE OF HIV INFECTION IN 2003

A New cases of HIV infection reported this year

In the first ten months of 2003, another 201 Singaporeans were detected to be HIV infected. About 88% of the new cases detected this year were males and 12% were females.

2 Sexual transmission remains the main mode of HIV transmission among Singaporeans. Of the 201 cases reported this year, 198 cases acquired the infection through the sexual route with heterosexual transmission accounting for 78% of infections, homosexual transmission 15% and bisexual transmission 5%. The remaining 2% was due to intravenous drug use. There was no perinatal transmission. Among those who acquired the infection through the sexual route, about 88% had sexual exposure to prostitutes (locally and overseas) and/or casual sex partners.

3 Those aged between 30 to 49 years of age accounted for about 63% of all new cases reported this year. Those aged between 50 to 59 years accounted for 14% and 20 to 29 years accounted for about 13% of new cases this year. Of the new cases, about 46% were single while about 38% were married, 13% were divorced and 3% were widowed.

Total number of HIV infected Singaporeans

4 This brings the total number of HIV infected Singaporeans as of 31 October 2003 to 2034 including 17 children (Table 1). Of these, 770 are asymptomatic carriers, 488 have full-blown AIDS and 776 have died

5 Heterosexual transmission has been the most common mode of HIV transmission among Singaporeans since 1991 (Table 2). Most of these cases contracted the infection through casual sex and sex with prostitutes in Singapore and overseas.

6 The majority of the HIV infected Singaporeans are males with 1780 cases; 254 are females (Table 3) giving a sex ratio of seven males to one female. Among the males, 60% were single at the point of diagnosis. For the females, however, the majority (63%) were married.

7 About 84% are Chinese, 8% Malays, 5% Indians and 3% others ethnic groups (Table 4). About 20% of the HIV infected Singaporeans were working in the sales and

service sector and another 18% were production craftsman and plant/machine assemblers (Table 6).

B Ministry's advice

8 The Ministry would like to emphasise that the only way to avoid AIDS is to remain faithful to one's spouse and to avoid casual sex and sex with prostitutes. A HIV infected person looks and feels normal during the early stage of the infection. It is therefore not possible to tell if a person is infected or not by looking at his/her appearance. Persons who engage in casual sex or sex with prostitutes are advised to lower their risk by wearing condoms.

9 The Ministry reminds those who are at risk of being infected with the HIV virus not to donate blood. Those who are at risk of being infected are advised to see their doctors for HIV screening. All women who are pregnant are also encouraged to go for HIV screening so that measures to prevent transmission from mother to infant could be taken early for those who are found to be HIV infected. The identities of persons who come forward for testing and those who are found to be HIV positive will be kept strictly confidential.

10 AIDS is not transmitted through normal day to day contacts with a HIV infected person at home, in school or at the workplace. You cannot get AIDS from coughs, sneezes, shaking hands, hugging, sharing of food and cutlery, sharing of toilets, etc. The AIDS virus has to go directly into your bloodstream before it can infect you.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH
24 NOVEMBER

For media queries, please contact:

Esther Wong
Media Relations Executive
Tel: 63257429 / 98200359
esther_wong@moh.gov.sg

Nikole Lee
Media Relations Executive
Tel: 63259174 / 98245058
nikole_lee@moh.gov.sg

TABLE 1
NUMBER OF SINGAPOREANS REPORTED WITH HIV INFECTION/AIDS
(1985 – October 2003)

Year	HIV/AIDS				AIDS			
	Male	Female	Total	Rate*	Male	Female	Total	Rate*
1985	2	0	2	0.8	0	0	0	
1986	6	1	7	2.8	1	0	1	0.4
1987	10	0	10	3.9	3	0	3	1.2
1988	15	0	15	5.8	6	0	6	2.3
1989	9	1	10	3.8	5	0	5	1.9
1990	17	0	17	6.2	8	0	8	2.9
1991	39	3	42	15.0	12	0	12	4.3
1992	49	6	55	19.3	17	1	18	6.3
1993	58	6	64	22.0	19	3	22	7.6
1994	76	10	86	29.0	44	4	48	16.2
1995	102	9	111	36.8	51	5	56	18.6
1996	123	16	139	45.3	89	3	92	30.0
1997	157	16	173	55.4	80	8	88	28.2
1998	167	32	199	62.7	112	13	125	39.4
1999	171	35	206	63.9	125	15	140	43.5
2000	193	33	226	69.3	128	15	143	43.8
2001	204	33	237	71.4	136	16	152	45.8
2002	206	28	234	69.3	133	13	146	43.2
Oct 2003	176	25	201		104	11	115	
Total	**1780**	**254**	**2034**		**1073**	**107**	**1180**	

* per million population

TABLE 2
DISTRIBUTION OF HIV INFECTED SINGAPOREANS
BY MODES OF TRANSMISSION
(1985 – October 2003)

Mode of Transmission	1985-1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003 Oct
Sexual Orientation														
Heterosexual	16	22	37	47	62	83	103	135	163	154	194	191	184	156
Homosexual	31	11	12	6	15	17	12	12	12	29	12	22	30	31
Bisexual	12	3	3	9	9	10	20	15	19	14	16	16	12	11
Intravenous drug use	1	3	1	2	0	0	4	5	1	6	3	6	6	3
Blood Transfusion	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0		0
Renal Transplant overseas	0	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
Perinatal (mother to child)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	3	1	2	2	0
Total	**61**	**42**	**55**	**64**	**86**	**111**	**139**	**173**	**199**	**206**	**226**	**237**	**234**	**201**

TABLE 3

HIV INFECTED SINGAPOREANS BY MARITAL STATUS

(1985 – October 2003)

Marital Status	Male	Female	Total
Single	1063 59.7%	49 19.3%	1112 54.7%
Married	507 28.5%	160 63.0%	667 32.8%
Divorced/Sep	165 9.3%	26 10.2%	191 9.4%
Widowed	45 2.5%	19 7.5%	64 3.1%
Total	1780 100.0%	254 100.0%	2034 100.0%

TABLE 4
HIV/AIDS INFECTED SINGAPOREANS BY ETHNIC GROUP
(1985 – October 2003)

Ethnic Group	Number	Percentage
Chinese	1706	83.9
Malay	161	7.9
Indian/Sikh/Pakistani	95	4.7
Others	72	3.5
Total	**2034**	**100.0**

TABLE 5
HIV INFECTED SINGAPOREANS BY AGE AND SEX
(1985 – October 2003)

Age at Diagnosis	Male	Female	Total
< 10	9 0.5%	8 3.1%	17 0.8%
10 -19	10 0.6%	4 1.6%	14 0.7%
20 - 29	291 16.3%	98 38.6%	389 19.1%
30 - 39	666 37.4%	65 25.6%	731 35.9%
40 - 49	456 25.6%	40 15.7%	496 24.4%
50 - 59	194 10.9%	26 10.2%	220 10.8%
60 & Above	154 8.7%	13 5.1%	167 8.2%
Total	1780 100.0%	254 100.0%	2034 100.0%

TABLE 6
HIV/AIDS INFECTED SINGAPOREANS BY OCCUPATION
(1985 – October 2003)

OCCUPATION	Number	%
Managerial	175	8.6
Professional	74	3.6
Technical	131	6.4
Clerical	113	5.6
Services/Sales	403	19.8
Production Craftman	189	9.3
Plant/Machine/Assembly	185	9.1
Cleaners/Labourers	246	12.1
Housewives	109	5.4
Unemployed	249	12.2
Others	160	7.9
TOTAL	**2034**	**100.0**