

Human immunodeficiency virus and the opiate dependents in Thailand

Vichai Poshyachinda¹, Paipun Phitayanon¹, Sasitorn Chamthavorn¹, Thongchai Uneklabh² and Chintra Uneklabh²

¹Institute of Health Research, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand

²Thanyarak Hospital Department of Medicine Service Ministry of Public Health, Bangkok, Thailand

ABSTRACT

The present retrospective study of the HIV seropositive IVDU from the records of Thanyarak Hospital revealed that the number of cases accounted for nearly half of all those reported to the MPH. The epidemic spread of HIV infection among IVDU appears to have started around the beginning of 1988. The transmission of the HIV infection in this population was more rapid in Bangkok and the highly urbanized areas of provincial cities than in rural areas. The HIV seropositives were, in general, young male heroin users employed in skilled and unskilled labour. The IVDU seemed to be at much lower risk than the IVHU. The extremely rapid spread of the HIV infection among the existing IVDU population suggests that the extent of the epidemic might not be too far from saturation. The situation calls for great concern regarding the transmission of HIV infection to other segments of the population that have immediate contact with the IVDU such as their spouses and off-spring.

Key words : HIV transmission, Heroin, Opium, Injection

Technical Report No. DA.1/89.1989