

NEWS BRIEFS

FROM WIRE DISPATCHES

Young gay men face new wave of AIDS because of attitudes

By DANIEL Q. HANEY
Associated Press

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — A generation of young gay men across the industrialized world, ignoring the lessons of the AIDS epidemic, risk a new wave of infection of the human immunodeficiency virus by engaging in dangerous sex, researchers reported yesterday.

The trend means that substantial numbers of gay men who came of age after the AIDS epidemic was recognized are infected, and many more will get the virus in the near future.

First spotted in San Francisco a few years ago, the pattern now has been documented across the United States, Europe and Canada.

"The epidemic of HIV among young gay men is not only an individual tragedy but is certainly also a major public health concern," said John de Wit, a psychologist at the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands.

In some parts of the United States, as many as one in 10 gay men under the age of 25 carries the virus, and the risk seems to be especially high for minorities.

De Wit outlined the evidence of youthful AIDS infection at the 11th International Conference on AIDS.

A variety of surveys have found that about one-third of gay men in their 20s engage in anal sex without condoms, the riskiest form of homosexual behavior.

The research suggests that young gay men are two to three times more likely than older gay

men to become infected with HIV, which causes AIDS. In San Francisco, about 3 percent of young homosexuals are infected annually.

Surveys in other U.S. cities show that gay black youngsters are about twice as likely as whites the same age to be infected this way.

In the United States and other Western countries, homosexual sex is the leading cause of AIDS virus infections, although the numbers of gay men getting the virus have fallen since the start of the epidemic. It now accounts for just under half of all newly reported U.S. AIDS cases.

Dangerous sex fell dramatically among older gay men after the epidemic emerged in the early 1980s. Experts think one reason risky behavior continues among the young is that they have not yet seen their friends die of the disease.

Another is the kind of risk-taking common among the young — the same impulse that prompts teenagers to drive fast or take up smoking.

At the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, epidemiologist Linda Valeroy has studied gay men in their teens and 20s in seven areas of four states.

She found that seven of every 100 are infected. By comparison, the infection rate among youngsters who apply for the federal Job Corps program is two per 1,000.

De Wit said new AIDS prevention strategies should be aimed directly at the young and go beyond simply telling them what's safe and what isn't.

WORLD

World
scene

**Gay age of consent
debated in Britain**

LONDON — Britain's House of Lords launched a fiery debate yesterday on whether to cut the age of consent for teen-age homosexual sex.

Some of the mostly aging members of the unelected upper house of Parliament attempted to overturn a bill approved by the lower House of Commons in February reducing the age for legal gay sex from 18 to 16.

In this relatively rare confrontation between the two chambers of Parliament, Lord Simon of Glaisdale, 83, warned his fellow peers against being influenced by the "propaganda on behalf of homosexuality."