

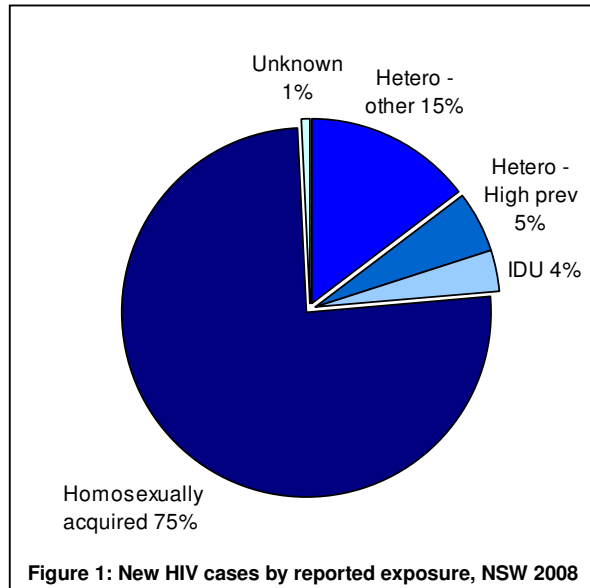
HIV in NSW, 2008

Summary

There were 322 new cases of HIV infection in NSW in 2008 – 290 males and 32 females; age range 13-75 years. Most cases (75%) were homosexually acquired; 20% heterosexually acquired and 4% acquired through injecting drug use (IDU). One percent of cases did not have their exposure reported (Figure 1).

Methods

Under the Public Health Act, laboratories report all confirmed HIV infections to NSW Health and a questionnaire is sent to all notifying doctors to collect epidemiological information on cases. In 2008, additional follow up occurred which resulted in more complete information and improved classification of year of infection.



Tests conducted

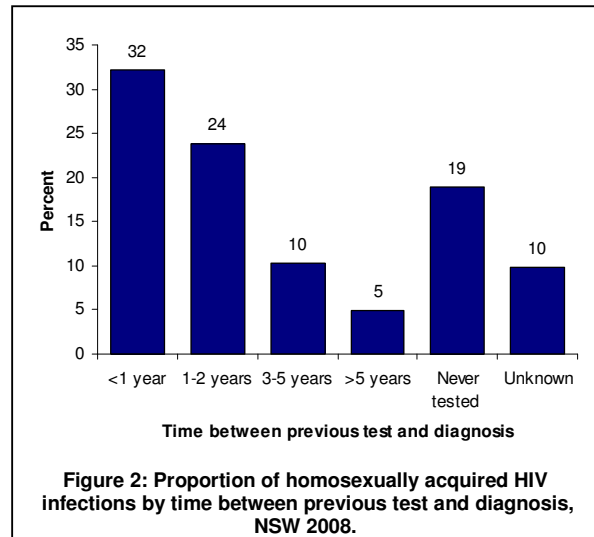
In NSW in 2008 there were 636 HIV positive tests reported from reference laboratories. Of these, 322 were in NSW residents newly diagnosed with HIV. Of the remaining 314, 226 were repeat tests of previously confirmed cases, 64 were for cases previously diagnosed either overseas or interstate, and 24 were people residing overseas or interstate.

Homosexually acquired HIV

Among the 322 new cases in NSW in 2008, 243 (75%) were homosexually acquired. Most cases (71%) were residents of central and south east Sydney and 63% were Australian born.

Only a third reported having had a previous HIV test in the last year and 19% reported never having had a test before (Figure 2). Almost half (45%) had evidence of recent infection (i.e.

either a negative or indeterminate HIV antibody test or a seroconversion illness in the previous 12 months). However, 10% (24 cases) had evidence of advanced disease at time of diagnosis (CD4 count <200 or an AIDS defining illness within 3 months of HIV diagnosis). While the median age of patients with advanced disease was 41 years, patients with recent infection were evenly spread across their 20s, 30s and 40s.



Heterosexually acquired HIV

Of the 322 new cases 65 (20%) were heterosexually acquired. Of these, one quarter were born in high prevalence countries who reported heterosexual sex with a partner from a high prevalence country. Nine were female and eight were male. Most were likely acquired outside Australia. One quarter presented early and one quarter presented late in their infection.

Of the remaining three quarters of people with heterosexually acquired HIV infections, 28 were males and 19 were females and half (49%) were Australian born. There was no geographic clustering. Of these, 19% were diagnosed early and 23% late.

HIV acquired through IDU

There were 12 cases of HIV acquired through injecting drug use – 8 males and 4 females. Nine were Australian born. There was no clustering by age or geographical location.

Conclusion

The number of HIV notifications in NSW remains stable. Homosexual acquisition is the most common exposure for HIV infection and highlights the importance of promoting safe sex practices and regular testing among this group.