The CDC's Case Definition of AIDS: Implications of Proposed Revisions

June 1992

OTA-BP-H-89
NTIS order #PB92-216126
OTA PROJECT STAFF--THE CDC’S CASE DEFINITION OF AIDS:
IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSED REVISIONS

BACKGROUND PAPER

Roger C. Herdman,  Assistant Director, OTA,
Health and Life Sciences Division

Clyde J. Behney, Health Program Manager

Project Staff

Robert S. McDonough,  Study Director
Jacqueline A. Corrigan,  Senior Analyst

Sharon Y. Hamilton, Research Assistant
Kerry B. Kemp, Senior Analyst
Michelle Odom, Research Assistant
Sarah Sa’adah, Research Assistant

Administrative Staff

Marian Grochowski, Office Administrator
Kimberly Holmlund, Word Processor Specialist
Eileen Murphy, P.C. Specialist
Kelly Faulks, Secretary

This background paper was prepared as part of OTA’s
ongoing HIV-related assessment

May 1992
The Centers for Disease Control’s (CDC) AIDS case definition is used to monitor trends in the number and distribution of AIDS cases in the United States. The AIDS case definition measures severe morbidity due to infection with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). This information is then used in formulating Federal and State policies for the prevention, treatment, and control of AIDS. In addition, the AIDS case definition has been used in disability determinations by the Social Security Administration.

Congress has been concerned about recent reports that the present AIDS case definition does not include some severe manifestations of HIV infection that occur in women and injection drug users. This is of particular concern because most HIV-infected women and injection drug users are African Americans or Hispanics. The CDC proposes to implement a revised definition of AIDS in the summer of 1992. The CDC believes that this revised definition of AIDS will adequately capture severe manifestations of HIV infection in these populations.

This background paper examines the epidemiologic evidence used by the CDC in deciding to revise the AIDS case definition and the impact the proposed definition will have on surveillance. The paper also explores the logistical consequences and other implications of the revised definition, including its impact on Social Security disability determinations. The issues discussed in this paper were the subject of a workshop conducted by OTA on October 22, 1991.

This background paper was prepared in response to a request by the Subcommittee on Human Resources and Intergovernmental Relations of the House “Committee on Government Operations.

This background paper is the eighth in OTA’s series of studies on HIV-related issues. The preceding papers in this series were: Do Insects Transmit AIDS? (9/87); AIDS and Health Insurance: An OTA Survey (2/88); How Effective is AIDS Education? (6/88); The Impact of AIDS on the Kaiser Permanence Medical Care Program (Northern California Region) (7/88); How Has Federal Research on AIDS/HIV Disease Contributed to Other Fields (4/90); The Effectiveness of Drug Abuse Treatment: Implications for Controlling UDS/HIV Infection (9/90); and HIV in the Health Care Workplace (11/91).

Previous OTA reports addressing AIDS-related issues include: 1) Blood Policy and Technology (1/85); 2) Review of the Public Health Service’s Response to AIDS (technical memorandum, 2/85); 3) The Costs of AIDS and other HIV Infections: Review of the Estimates (staff paper, 5/87); and 4) Medical Testing and Health Insurance (8/88).
The Definition of AIDS: Epidemiological, Clinical, and Policy Implications

Tuesday, October 22, 1991
Office of Technology Assessment

Workshop Participants

Robert S. McDonough, M.D., J.D., Study Director
Jacqueline A. Corrigan, J.D., Senior Analyst
Workshop Moderators

Ruth Berkelman, M.D.
Acting Director, Division of HIV/AIDS
Centers for Disease Control
Atlanta, GA

G. Steve Bowen, M. D., M.P.H.
Acting Associate Administrator for AIDS
Health Resources and Services Administration
Bureau of Health Resources Development
Rockville, MD

Mary Ann Chiasson, Ph. D., M. P.H., M.S.
Acting Assistant Commissioner
Disease Intervention Research
New York City Department of Health
New York, N.Y.

Judith Cohen, Ph.D., M. P.H., M.A.
San Francisco, CA

Elizabeth Cooper, J.D.
ACLU AIDS Project
New York, NY

Judith S. Currier, M.D.
Clinical Director for AIDS
Associate in Medicine
Beth Israel Hospital
Boston, MA

Jack DeHovitz, M.D.
Director, AIDS Prevention Center
SUNY Health Science Center at Brooklyn
Brooklyn, NY

Donald DeJarlais, Ph.D.
Director of Research
Chemical Dependency Institute
New York, NY

Karen M. Ezrine, M.D.
Chief, Medical Evaluation Branch
Office of Disability
Social Security Administration
Baltimore, MD

Dave Fleming, M.D.
Deputy State Epidemiologist
Oregon Department of Human Resources
Portland, OR

Howard Foard
Assistant Deputy Commissioner for Policy
and External Affairs
Office of Disability
Social Security Administration
Baltimore, MD

Philip Fornaci, J.D.
Staff Attorney
Whitman-Walker Clinic Inc.
Washington, DC

Jeff Jones, M.D., M.P.H.
Director, Disease Control and Epidemiology
Communicable Disease Division
South Carolina Department of Health
Columbia, SC

George Lemp, Ph.D., M.P.H.
Chief, AIDS Surveillance Branch
San Francisco Department of Public Health
San Francisco, CA

Jeff Levi, M.A.
Director of Government Affairs
AIDS Action Council
Washington, DC

Carol Levine, M.A.
Executive Director
The Orphan Project: The HIV Epidemic and New York City’s Children
Fund for the City of New York
New York, NY

Theresa M. McGovern, J.D.
Project Director, MFP Legal Services, Inc.
New York, NY

Janet Mitchell, M.D., M.P.H.
Chief of Perinatology
Harlem Hospital Center
New York, NY

Alfred J. Saah, M.D., M.P.H.
Director, Infectious Disease Program
School of Hygiene and Public Health
Johns Hopkins University
Baltimore, MD

Rand Stoneburner, M.D., M.P.H.
Surveillance Officer
Global Programme on AIDS
World Health Organization
Geneva
Switzerland

Pauline Thomas, M.D.
Director, Office of AIDS/HIV Surveillance
New York City Department of Health
New York, NY

Sten Vermund, M.D., Ph.D.
Chief, Epidemiology Branch
Clinical Research Program
Division of AIDS
National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
National Institute of Health
Bethesda, MD