

Jersey and SUNY Centers to Study The AIDS Virus in Heterosexuals

By JOSEPH F. SULLIVAN
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NEWARK, Dec. 15 — Amid warnings that the transmission of the AIDS virus among heterosexuals solely through sexual contact appears to be increasing, a five-year federally financed study of heterosexuals and AIDS was announced here today.

The study will be conducted by physicians at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey and the State University of New York Health Science Center in Brooklyn.

Northern New Jersey was selected for the study because the incidence of HIV infection among heterosexuals with no other apparent risk factors is double the national average. In New Jersey, 65 percent of the AIDS cases involve heterosexuals. Nationally, 70 percent involve gay and bisexual men.

Across the country, 4 percent of the infected heterosexual population are

lyn school under the direction of Dr. Sheldon H. Landesman, who has worked on research with Dr. Weiss, and Dr. Jack A. DeHovitz.

'Fairly Rigorous Set of Tests'

Although the New Jersey study will deal with men and women, the New York study will focus on heterosexual women, a spokeswoman for the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, Laurie K. Doepel, said.

Dr. Weiss said the New Jersey researchers intended to recruit 1,000 people at risk of becoming infected or already infected through heterosexual contacts with members of high-risk groups.

The recruiting will be carried out when the people arrive at testing and counseling centers at St. Michael's here, St. Joseph's Hospital in Paterson and the Jersey City Medical Center. Physicians will also refer participants.

"We will ask them to undergo a fairly rigorous set of tests and will provide psychological counseling and monitor how effective the counseling is in getting them to modify their behavior," Dr. Weiss said. "We hope to find strategies that will help people avoid infection and convince them to change their behavior, much the way the study of AIDS among homosexual men led many to change their life styles."

When the study starts in June, 90 volunteers infected with the virus will be tested, treated and counseled.

The study will try to determine how HIV is transmitted to heterosexuals. "We need to construct a comprehensive profile of heterosexual AIDS," Dr. Weiss said, "so that we can recognize the condition as early as possible and formulate a viable battle plan."

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people with no risk factors other than heterosexual contacts. In New Jersey, the average for the last few years has been 8 percent, or 446 cases. John F. French, director of alcohol and drug abuse research of the State Health Department, said the level rose last year, to 11 percent.

Although they do not belong to such high-risk groups as bisexual males, intravenous drug users, prostitutes, hemophiliacs or people who have received an HIV-contaminated blood transfusion, most of the heterosexuals who will be studied are sexual partners of people in high-risk groups.

Dr. George Perez of St. Michael's Hospital said there were indications of a "second wave" of infections emanating from the heterosexual partners of high-risk people to people with no direct contacts with anyone in the high-risk groups.

The study will be financed by a \$13.8 million grant from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

The principal investigator is Dr. Stanley H. Weiss, a former researcher at the National Cancer Institute and now chief of AIDS and retroviral epidemiology in the department of preventative medicine and community health at the state medical school.

A parallel study that hospital officials said was being financed by a \$9 million grant will be done at the Brook-