Medical News

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AIDS Research Intensifying: 88 Medicines in Testing, 14 Approved

Progress in acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) research is intensifying, with 88 medicines in development-a 42% increase over the number in testing in 1990, according to a survey released in November 1991 by the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association (PMA).

'This progress is evident both in long-term and short-term comparisons with previous PMA surveys," said Gerald J. Mossinghoof, PMA president.

Key results of the survey included the following:

- During the past 12 months, three medicines for AIDS and AIDS-related conditions have been approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), bringing the total to 14 in four years. Another five medicines are at the FDA awaiting approval.
- The number of medicines in development by the research-based pharmaceutical industry has more than tripled since 1987, when PMA conducted its first survey on AIDS medicines.
- These medicines are being developed by 64 companies, compared with 40 in 1990.
- No vaccines were in testing in 1987; today there are seven.

Emotional and Social Impact of Herpes Severe and Long-Lasting, Survey Says

The emotional, social, and psychological impact of genital herpes is serious, long-lasting, and little-changed from a decade ago, according to a survey of 3,000 people with herpes released in November 1991.

The survey, conducted by the American Social Health Association (ASHA), details the challenges people with herpes face, not only in coping with the disease, but also in dealing with social and sexual relationships, as well as with medical care.

"Herpes may have been replaced by the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) in the public eye, but it's still very much with us, and it continues to be a serious problem," said Peggy Clarke, MPH, ASHA's executive director, who presented the survey findings at a recent meeting of herpes support group coordinators in Houston, Texas. 'While there are more than one million people infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), there are over 30 million people infected with herpes. And while not fatal, the consequences of herpes are every bit as personally traumatic as they were ten years ago."

According to Clarke, the survey will help ASHA develop new patient outreach and physician education programs designed to improve quality of life for those with herpes, a recurrent viral disease.

The survey, consisting of 200 questions, was mailed to the 5,000 readers of the *helper* (the ASHA newsletter for people with herpes) in July 1991 to explore their experiences regarding their disease, medical treatment, and social and emotional issues. The questionnaire contained five sections: medical history, healthcare, treatment, personal impact, and general information. The response rate was 62%, and the survey was conducted under an education grant from the Burroughs Wellcome Company.

According to survey responses, the first outbreak of herpes is a traumatic time for those infected. Eighty-two percent reported feeling depressed, 75% feared rejection, 69% reported feelings of isolation, and 55% feared discovery. 'With subsequent outbreaks, some of these feelings decrease," said Clarke. But in the long term, people with herpes still report depression and fear of rejection. Among those who had had outbreaks within the past 12 months, 52% reported feelings of depression, and 52% said they feared being rejected in social situations.

In addition to concerns about support from friends and colleagues, people with herpes often have trouble getting the help they seek from healthcare

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