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U.S. Department of Justice  
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# International Summaries

A Series of Selected Translations in Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice

National Institute of Justice /NCJRS  
NCJ 120341

From Sweden

## AIDS-HIV Within the Swedish Correctional System

*A series of 1-day surveys helps Swedish officials assess the extent of HIV infection within the country's correctional system.*

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NCJRS

MAY 5 1992

ACQUISITIONS

### Introduction

In January 1988, the Swedish Correctional Authority made its first attempt at determining the incidence of HIV infection within the correctional system. All correction officials received survey forms and were asked to provide information on known cases of HIV infection among their wards.

Officials hoped to glean information about the extent of HIV infection among correctional wards. They also hoped the survey would quantify the incidence of HIV infection among narcotics addicts in general, since a large number of persons entering the correctional system are substance abusers.

This summary discusses two updates, conducted in November 1988 and again in May 1989, to the January 1988 baseline survey.

This is a summary of *HIV-Situationen Inom Kriminalvården den 8 Maj 1989*. Kriminalvårdsstyrelsen, PSF PM 1989:3. 24 pages. Summary published spring 1990.

### Methodology

Swedish correctional officials were asked to provide data on all known HIV carriers within the system on May 8, 1989. The survey included those on parole and in community-based programs and asked for demographic information and substance abuse histories.

Respondents were also asked to differentiate between institutionalized and noninstitutionalized persons under the authority of correctional institutions and those in jail, on probation, or in diversionary or community programs.

*A word of caution.* Answers were hindered somewhat by confidentiality restrictions and the fact that official records do not always include information on HIV infection. There may also be some disparity in the numbers, since the HIV-infected population identified in the first census (November 1988) partly overlaps those of the May 1989 survey; therefore, comparisons between the two surveys should be made with caution.

### Results

As of May 8, 1989, a total of 167 known HIV cases were identified among the approximately 17,000 individuals in the Swedish correctional system—down from the 177 reported in November 1988. At these rates, approximately 1 percent of the correctional population are HIV positive, a rate of infection 40 times that of the general Swedish population.

Most of those within the correctional system are substance abusers and represent approximately 35 percent of the 494 drug addicts reported to the Swedish National Bacteriology Laboratory in April 1989. Of the HIV-infected offenders, 80 percent were residing in the community, 16 percent were in institutions, and 4 percent were in jails on May 8, 1989, figures which correspond closely to the November 1988 results.

Officials have made significant progress in reaching all drug-addicted/HIV-infected persons through correctional treatment programs. Results indicate that long-term followup and treatment is

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necessary after those offenders are released into the community. By providing intensive treatment for a specified time period, institutions can plan and initiate long-term plans for treatment.

## *Geographic breakdown*

The Stockholm urban area accounted for 74 percent of HIV cases in both the November 1988 and May 1989 surveys. Similar figures were found when community-based correction settings were evaluated separately. Stockholm's central and southwest districts reported 20 and 28 percent of the cases, respectively.

On May 8, 1989, 26 HIV-infected persons were housed in correctional institutions as opposed to 30 in November 1988. Half were incarcerated in national institutions, and another 11 HIV-infected offenders were jailed.

## *Demographic characteristics*

**Age.** Approximately 80 percent of the HIV-positive inmates in both the November 1988 survey and the May 1989 followup were between 25 and 39 years of age; approximately 15 percent were between 40 and 49 years old; and the rest, roughly 5 percent, were under 24.

**Sex.** In May 1989, females made up approximately 20 percent of the HIV-positive persons within the correctional system, a rate slightly lower than that found in the country's general population; statistics from the Swedish National Bacteriology Laboratory indicate that females accounted for 144, or approximately 30 percent, of the nation's 494 HIV-positive drug users.

## *Occupations*

Of the 167 HIV-infected persons identified in May 1989, 13 percent of the HIV-infected represented in the May 1989 survey were either employed or enrolled in school; 16 percent were unemployed but able to work; 51 percent were unable to work, and 19 percent were in institutions.

## *Drug use in the year before arrest*

This information was solicited to determine which category of drug user had the highest incidence of HIV infection. The data indicate that about 50 percent of HIV-infected persons identified in both 1988 and 1989 had either used opiates exclusively or in combination with amphetamines; another 30 percent used amphetamines intravenously. Researchers were unable to determine the extent of drug use for about 8 percent of the May 1989 population and 6 percent of the November 1988 sample.

## *Methadone maintenance programs*

Methadone maintenance was the dominant treatment approach for drug users: 29 percent of the HIV-infected persons identified in May 1989 and 34 percent of the November 1988 group had been admitted to—or were on a waiting list for—a methadone maintenance program. The 19 individuals actually admitted to methadone programs in 1989 had a high success rate, with 16 (or 84 percent) showing no known drug abuse after joining the program. The 3 cases that relapsed back into drug use reported using injected drugs in the last 2 months.

Most of those awaiting admission to methadone programs in 1989 were placed in treatment homes. Despite this interim approach, 22 out of the 30 continued to inject drugs.

## *Incarcerated persons*

Of the 26 HIV-infected persons in institutions in May 1989, 13 were serving sentences of more than a year, 10 were serving sentences of 6 months to 1 year, and 3 were serving less than 6 months. In November 1988, 28 of the HIV-infected persons were incarcerated, 13 serving sentences of more than a year, 8 serving sentences of 6 months to a year, and 7 serving sentences of less than a year.

Most of the infected inmates were housed in general prison wards, and only one had been placed in a sick ward. Most of the infected persons in the general section, however, received long-term treatment including regular visits from medical personnel.

In the May 1989 survey, four of the 26 HIV-infected inmates reported injecting drugs during their incarceration as well as throughout other stages of processing; three out of the four also used non-injected narcotics. Because the limited supply of syringes in an institution greatly increases the risk of spreading infection, any injection of drugs during incarceration must be considered very serious.

## *Nonincarcerated clients*

On May 8, 1989, a total of 135 HIV-infected persons were identified within the correctional system, but not incarcerated. Instead, they were placed in a vari-

ety of alternative programs including open drug-related wards and family homes, as well as being referred to social services.

Of the 135 persons in alternative programs, a total of 61 persons (45 percent) had been referred to the social welfare services and were receiving treatment either for drugs or HIV-related problems. Another 35 individuals (26 percent) were not in registered treatment programs. In November 1988, only 50 percent were seeing doctors, and 10 were hospitalized; by May 1989, most persons were under the regular care of a physician, and only 3 were hospitalized, indicating that the health care of HIV-infected persons was improving.

## Drug abuse

Most HIV-infected persons find drug abuse to be a sensitive issue, and some respondents in the 1988 survey were hesitant to discuss the topic. In the 1989 survey, researchers modified questions regarding recent drug use in hopes that responses would be more accurate. This change, however, means that statistics on recent drug abuse cannot be compared between the two surveys.

In November 1988, 50 (37 percent) of the 177 HIV-infected persons admitted injecting drugs in the past 2 months, and another 17 (13 percent) reported using other forms of drugs. In total, 67 clients (50 percent) had used drugs in some form.

In May 1989, 66 (51 percent) of the 167 HIV-infected persons reported using intravenous drugs during 2 months prior to the survey, and another 16 percent reported other types of drug use. In all, 87 percent reported some type of drug use.

## ARC/AIDS

AIDS-Related Complex (ARC) is not a simply defined medical term; rather, it has been used in the past to describe a number of serious symptoms, currently described as HIV-infection/AIDS. Because symptoms vary, it is difficult to clearly identify this group in the studies.

### *Extent of the problem*

On April 30, 1989, five cases of AIDS among drug addicts had been reported to the Swedish National Bacteriology Laboratory. Approximately 15 percent of HIV-infected drug users had, at the same time, begun showing symptoms of HIV-infection, and, in fact, many developed AIDS within 1 to 2 years.

It is critical to identify those individuals showing ARC/AIDS symptoms, since research indicates that the virus is most contagious at this time. Drug abuse and other high-risk behaviors present serious problems from an epidemiologic viewpoint. In addition, at this stage, those with the disease tend to require intensive medical attention and emotional support.

Out of the total HIV-infected population in the Swedish correctional system, the number of persons with ARC/AIDS increased from 18 individuals (11 percent) in November 1988 to 32 individuals (19 percent) in May 1989. The largest increase occurred among those in community corrections settings.

In November 1988, 13 of the 18 persons who had been diagnosed with ARC/AIDS were in community corrections, and 5 were in institutions. Another 13 were under the authority of correctional officials in the Stockholm region. In May 1989, 28 of the 32 clients with ARC/AIDS were in community correc-

tions, and 4 were in institutions. Of these, 16 were under the authority of correctional authorities in the Stockholm area.

### *Drug abuse among this group*

During their last year of freedom, 18 (56 percent) of the 32 ARC/AIDS persons used intravenous drugs, either exclusively or in combination with other drugs. For nine individuals, this drug use was limited to intravenous amphetamine abuse. Three cases of other types of abuse were reported as well as two cases in which there was no known abuse.

Those in community-based corrections facilities were also asked about their drug use during the past 2 months. Of the 28 responding, 14 reported intravenous drug use, and 4 reported abusing other types of drugs. Officials could find no known abuse for 8 persons. No data were available on two persons. Nearly 70 percent of the ARC/AIDS diagnosed persons in community corrections were currently using drugs, and about half were currently using intravenous drugs.

### *Treatment contacts for ARC/AIDS*

Of the 32 persons reported as ARC/AIDS in the May 1989 survey, 4 were enrolled in methadone programs, 6 were on waiting lists for these programs, and 4 had been dropped from methadone programs. It is worth noting that the number of ARC/AIDS persons enrolled in methadone programs dropped from 72 to 13 percent from November 1988 (when 13 of 18 individuals were enrolled) to May 1989.

Of the four ARC/AIDS diagnosed persons who were incarcerated, three were housed with the general population, and one was in a sick ward.

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Of the 28 ARC/AIDS-diagnosed persons in community-based correction settings, 3 were in a treatment home, 1 was in a family home, 2 were under the care of a visiting nurse, and 1 was hospitalized. Most of these individuals received regular visits from a doctor. Five were either employed or in school, and 13 were unable to work.

## Summary

Highlights from both the November 1988 and May 1989 surveys include:

- 167 cases of known HIV infection existed within the Swedish correctional system as of May 8, 1989, compared to 171 cases in November 1988.
- This figure represents about 1 percent of the total correctional population, and indicates a prevalence of infection about 40 times higher than that of the general population.
- In May 1989, 32 of the HIV-infected persons were incarcerated, including 6 in local jails; and 135 were in community corrections.

- Of the 167 infected persons, 123 were located in the Stockholm region, although infection has been reported in every correctional region in Sweden except Växjö and Linköping.

- Of the HIV-positive individuals, 23 percent were under 30 years of age, and 59 percent were between 30 and 39 years of age. Only 18 percent were 40 years old or older.

- Of the HIV-infected, 136 were males and 28 were females.

- Users of intravenous opiate drugs made up 54 percent of HIV-infected persons in the correctional population, while 30 percent were users of intravenous amphetamine drugs. Eight percent of the HIV-infected were not users of intravenous drugs, and another 8 percent did not use drugs.

- Of the 135 persons in community corrections in May 1989, 20 were placed in treatment homes, 7 in family homes, and 5 in other alternative care situations.

- Of those in community corrections, 42 (31 percent) were required to report regularly to a treatment program.

- Routine use of intravenous drugs was reported by 51 percent of the HIV-infected within community corrections, compared with 37 percent in the November 1988 survey.

- The May 1989 survey indicated that 30 correctional wards had at least one ARC/AIDS case and two cases of full-blown AIDS. This compares with 17 and 1, respectively, in the November 1988 survey.

- The May 1989 survey revealed that 29 percent of those HIV-infected persons were enrolled in or were on a waiting list for methadone programs, corresponding to 34 percent of the November 1988 population.

- During both survey periods, methadone was the dominant treatment approach for drug-addicted persons who had ARC/AIDS.

*The Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs, coordinates the activities of the following program Offices and Bureaus: National Institute of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and Office for Victims of Crime.*