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National Cancer Institute, Dr Robert Gallo is investigating the possibility that a group of viruses known as 'retroviruses,' which are already linked with a human leukaemia, may be involved in an AIDS cancer, known as Kaposi's Sarcoma and previously only seen in such a deadly form in parts of Africa.

With increased public attention the distress and grief of the homosexual community is being widely recognised. Novelist Larry Kramer, a founder of Gay Men's Health Crisis in New York, says: 'I have lost 21 friends in the past 18 months, and 30 more are seriously ill. It is a tragic thing that is happening.'

Gay Men's Health Crisis has expanded rapidly and now has 30 counsellors to help both the newly diagnosed victims and those dying from the disease. Major efforts go into fund raising for research and patient services, and in New York scarcely a week goes by without an AIDS 'Benefit.'

Two weeks ago one such benefit at the Castelli art gallery in Soho included paintings donated for auction by artists such as Rauchenberg, Lichtenstein and Jasper Johns. The most dramatic benefit of all took place last night, when GMHC bought out a full house of 18,000 seats for one evening's performance at Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey's Circus. All the seats were resold and it is hoped to raise \$250,000. The evening opened with Leonard Bernstein conducting the circus orchestra while a Metropolitan star soprano sang 'The Star Spangled Banner.'

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OPINION

AIDS emergency

THE mysterious ailment known as AIDS — Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome — which has struck predominantly at American homosexuals, is potentially fatal because it deprives the body of normal defence mechanisms.

People who need blood in hospital can also be vulnerable if the blood is contaminated. As exclusively revealed in The Mail on Sunday today, two cases of this kind have probably occurred here already. The victims were not homosexuals but patients who had been treated with plasma imported from America.

Although the equipment is being hurried forward, Britain will not be self-sufficient in producing this special kind of blood until 1986. Fortunately, there is an alternative. It can be bought from Switzerland.

The matter is extremely urgent. Every necessary step must be taken at once to secure this literally vital supply of clean blood.