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WHO

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Press

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AIDS IN EUROPE, STATUS QUO 1983 Aarhus, 19-21 October 1983

Much has been written about the AIDS epidemic which continues to baffle scientists. In fact the wide publicity given to this new disease has had negative consequences in medical care, for instance in the way of a reluctance to use standard or new medical procedures, and to perform blood transfusions.

The epidemiological evidence shows clearly that AIDS is contagious and that it is probably transmitted by blood contact. No infectious agent has so far been identified, but a strong candidate at present is a C-type retrovirus.

Latent periods seem to range from a few to up to 18 months. It is still not clear what symptoms precede the fully developed AIDS. Neither is there precise information about the number of AIDS victims who harbour the putative infectious agent.

In any case the very poor prognosis for AIDS victims has made it essential to gather as much information as possible in a coordinated way, in order to help contain the disease through preventive measures and to set up international research projects.

To this end, the World Health Organization, together with the Danish Cancer Society and the European Organization for Cooperation in Cancer Prevention Studies (ECP), is convening a first European meeting on AIDS in Aarhus, Denmark, which will be attended by representatives of the health authorities of all European countries where the disease has occurred. The specific aims of the meeting will be:

1. to compile, for immediate publication, the available information concerning AIDS in Europe so as to give a picture of the initial years of the occurrence of the epidemic in this part of the world;
2. to summarize, for immediate publication, the available information concerning two pressing clinical problems, namely the nature of early prodromal symptoms of AIDS and the effectiveness of the different therapeutic strategies;
3. to draw up a set of recommendations concerning preventive measures, for the use of European health authorities and WHO;
4. to establish a permanent international monitoring system in Europe and to develop research projects on the disease that should be carried out on a collaborative basis by countries in Europe and other parts of the world.

Place of meeting:

Scanticon
Scandinavian Management and Conference
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