

Castle Buildings
STORMONT
BT4 3PP

HSS(MD) 14-2000

16 June 2000

To: Chief Executives Health and Social Services Boards
Chief Executives of HSS Trusts
Directors of Public Health of HSS Boards
Medical Director of HSS Trusts
Regional Epidemiologist, CDSC (NI)
Consultants in Communicable Disease Control
Consultants in Genito Urinary Medicine
Directors of Nursing of HSS Boards

Dear Colleague

REVIEW OF THE EVIDENCE OF RISK OF HIV TRANSMISSION ASSOCIATED WITH ORAL SEX

The enclosed review was completed by the UK Chief Medical Officers' Expert Advisory Group on AIDS in response to research evidence which showed that HIV could be transmitted through oral sex.

In 1998, new research evidence was published. It concluded that the risk of HIV transmission associated with oral sex might be greater than was previously supposed. Evidence from clinical case reports and epidemiological studies show that HIV can be transmitted through oral sex. An important conclusion of the review is that although the risk per episode of exposure may be low, the frequency of its occurrence may serve to increase its relative contribution to overall HIV transmission.

The review is being circulated to health care professionals, voluntary sector organisations and their workers who advise people about the risks of HIV transmission associated with sexual activities and on measures to keep this risk to a minimum. **The text can be freely copied and circulated as necessary.**

Further copies of the review can be obtained from Ruth Hickson, Room 719, at the Department of Health, Wellington House, 133-155 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8UG or by fax on 020 7972 4354.

Yours sincerely

**DR HENRIETTA CAMPBELL CB
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER**