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**REPORT FOLLOWED BY
RECOMMENDATIONS**

ETHICS OF RESEARCH AND CARE

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1996 JUNE 17TH

REPORT FOLLOWED BY RECOMMENDATIONS :
SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS AND INEQUALITIES.
AIDS IN THE FRENCH TERRITORIES IN THE
AMERICAS

REPORT

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Following its report, the National AIDS Council makes **two observations** prior to its recommendations :

- An epidemic with characteristics different from those in metropolitan France.
 - Because a large proportion of HIV transmission is heterosexual, the epidemic has characteristics different from those observed in metropolitan France.
 - the rarity of intravenous drug use masks different forms of consumption (e.g. crack) which lead indirectly to risk.
 - the migration flows characteristic of the Caribbean region render the French territories there extremely vulnerable to communicable diseases.
- A lesser response than in metropolitan France
 - AIDS is revelatory of structural deficits in health and welfare provision in the three territories.
 - AIDS not only underscores manifest inequalities between Martinique, Guadeloupe and its surrounding region and Guyana, but also highlights serious deficiencies in the applicable regulations.
 - We also observe that, in these territories, HIV-infected individuals are subject to increased social exclusion compared with metropolitan France.

In the light of these preliminary observations, **the National AIDS Council recommends** :

- that exceptional measures be taken to correct the structural deficiencies in these territories where health and welfare are concerned. These measures involve :
 - an urgent and significant effort in Guyana, and even more in Saint-Martin, where there is a lack of adequate hospital facilities ;
 - provision of beds for average and long periods of stay, home hospitalization and care directed at the alleviation of pain ;
 - improvement by the prisons department of the health situation in its establishments in the French territories in the region.
- that equality of rights between the inhabitants of the French territories in the Americas and those of metropolitan France be respected :

- the three territories, and their surrounding region, should receive treatment (where healthcare and prevention are concerned) which is equitable and proportional to their respective epidemiological positions ;
 - foreigners, even if they are illegal residents, and prisoners, should have easy access to prevention and care. The National AIDS Council draws attention to its Opinion of December 1995 regarding the situation of HIV-infected foreigners illegally resident in France ;
 - the decentralized government agencies (prefecture, heads of various ministerial departments) should ensure that the rights of HIV-infected individuals are respected, especially where housing and employment are concerned, and make available legal assistance for that purpose.
- that a coherent policy of AIDS prevention be established in the French territories in the region, which must include :
 - establishment of exchanges and contacts between the actors in prevention programmes in the three territories, and extension of those exchanges to participants in countries of the same region ;
 - a significant role for solidarity with HIV-infected individuals in prevention campaigns ;
 - the reinforcement, as part of the ongoing training of personnel in health and welfare programmes, of information provision on the preservation of confidentiality, and on the level and methodology of HIV screening ;
 - urgent prevention measures targeting foreign populations living in the territories ;
 - creation of a working group on "HIV and crack users".
 - access to condoms for prisoners, as requested in the National AIDS Council's 1993 report (Prison, AIDS and confidentiality) ;
 - the necessity of evaluating HIV prevention in the territories ;
 - that the regional dimension of the epidemic be given greater attention. To achieve this :
 - French medical cooperation in the region must first be reinforced ; and, secondly, it must be extended outside of the Antigua Islands, in priority toward Haiti.
 - France must contribute to the creation of a regional observatory for the pandemic covering all of the Caribbean Islands in partnership with the countries of the region.
 - social sciences research programmes on AIDS in the French territories in the Americas and in the Caribbean must be developed more extensively.