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Idaho officials say online hookups led to HIV

- The Associated Press
Edition Date: 10/10/08

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POCATELLO, Idaho — About half of the 19 HIV cases reported in southeastern Idaho this year have been traced to couples who met over the Internet, according to the Southeastern District Health Department.

The department reported that within the past three weeks, 10 men and one woman tested positive for HIV. Online hookups proved to be a common thread in most of those cases, said department investigator Maggie Mann.

"That's one thing most of them acknowledged," Mann told the Idaho State Journal.

"This is the largest group of positives I can remember in such a short period of time," she said.

Last year, her department reported eight HIV cases.

The jump in cases has prompted the department to consider offering more clinics to test for HIV in southeastern Idaho.

Pocatello Dr. David Hachey said more people in general are willing to take part in risky sexual behavior because of improvements in the treatment of HIV and AIDS.

"For someone who gets an HIV diagnosis, the life expectancy is very good. The medications we're using to treat it are giving people extended life expectancies that are almost normal," said Hachey, who oversees a clinic at Pocatello Family Medicine and has been working with HIV patients for 10 years.

"A lot of the fear we saw in the 1980s and 1990s of people dying, now we're just not seeing that," he said.

Hachey said people who live in small communities, such as Pocatello, are less prone to acknowledge that HIV is a risk.

"People in this community think they're immune to some of these bigger problems, which in fact they're not," he said.

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Comments: 12 Showing:

[pokyguy](#) wrote on October, 12 8:25 PM:

Reading the comments below only solidify the fact that the people of Southeast Idaho are enjoying living in blissful ignorance. It is time to wake up, this is not a "gay" disease it does not discriminate! Wake up people, know who you are sleeping with, know their status, know when they were last tested. This is a ridiculous situation that never had to escalate to the level it has!! I believe the Health Department offers free testing, if you are at risk at all, get tested!!! Think of it this way, If u meet one person and they have slept with 5 people recently before you, and those 5 people have slept with 5 people before that, and those 5 people slept with 5 people before that, 3 degrees of separation later, you need to know the sexual history of about 650 people.... funny how that works, seems to me that "hooking up online" isn't worth the risk!!!

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