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12 August 1997

Dr. David Satcher, Director
Centers for Disease Control
Atlanta, Georgia 30333

Dear Dr. Satcher

I note that you are the new Director of the CDC. For years the CDC has been putting out defective material about HIV and AIDS. As a new Director, you may not be aware of the extent to which this material is defective, but as you do become aware, you may be able to do something about it.

To continue past criticisms of CDC publications, I enclose some offhand comments concerning the December 1996 CDC HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report. I find internal and external inconsistencies, meaningless figures, and overall propaganda rather than science or medicine. Among other things, it is incumbent on the CDC either to withdraw formally its December 1992 definition which does not make immunosuppression a necessary condition to define AIDS, or to correct the false characterization of AIDS-defining diseases in the December 1996 Surveillance Report, inconsistent with the December 1992 definition. (Cf. item 2 in my Offhand Comments.) In any case, this inconsistency makes subsequent so-called statistics and figures very unreliable, and even meaningless.

Sincerely yours,

Serge Lang

Enclosure: My 12 August 1997 Offhand Comments about the December 1996 CDC HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report

cc: Arthur Gottlieb, Michael Bukrinsky, Peter Duesberg, Mark Craddock, Arthur Jaffe and John Ewing (President and Executive Director of the American Mathematical Society), Richard Atkinson (UC President), Paul Licht (UC Dean of Biological Sciences), Representative Gil Gutknecht, Donna Shalala, Nicholas Wade (New York Times), David Perlman (San Francisco Chronicle), Floyd Bloom (Science), Richard Horton (The Lancet), Bob Silvers (New York Review of Books), Madeleine Jacobs and Rudy Baum

(Chemical and Engineering "News"), etc.

OFFHAND COMMENTS ABOUT THE CDC
HIV/AIDS SURVEILLANCE REPORT (DECEMBER 1996)

by Serge Lang
12 August 1997

Right on the front page, the December 1996 CDC Surveillance Report has a table headed:

Adults/adolescents living with AIDS, by quarter, January 1988 through June 1996, adjusted for reporting delays, United States

The graph shows an increase between 1988 and 1996 from 30,000 to 220,000. There is a boxed purported definition of AIDS:

Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) is a specific group of diseases or conditions which are indicative of severe immunosuppression related to infection with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

1. What does "related" mean? Testing HIV positive on some test or other? Caused by HIV? With the use of the word "related", we see fudging about the role of HIV, as well as another manifestation of the long-standing circularity of the CDC definition.

2. The above definition, that the diseases or conditions defining AIDS "are indicative of severe immunosuppression", is inconsistent with the December 1992 definition by the CDC, which defines AIDS to be any one of 29 diseases if and only if the person is also HIV positive. Indeed, one of the defining diseases is a low T-cell count, but about 40% of the 29 diseases defining AIDS in the 1992-1993 CDC list DO NOT INVOLVE IMMUNOSUPPRESSION. For instance, Kaposi's sarcoma and cervical cancer are not "indicative of severe immunosuppression", but according to the December 1992 definition, they are among the AIDS-defining diseases in the presence of HIV, INCLUDING CASES WHEN THERE IS NO IMMUNOSUPPRESSION. Therefore under the December 1992 definition, immunosuppression, let alone "severe immunosuppression" is not a necessary condition for AIDS. SO THE DEFINITION BOXED ON THE FRONT PAGE OF THE DECEMBER 1996 SURVEILLANCE REPORT IS STILL A NEW DEFINITION, FURTHER CONTRIBUTING TO THE CHAOTIC MESS

COMING OUT OF THE CDC. [I remind the reader of at least 5 definitions of AIDS: (a) the pre-1987 CDC definition; (b) the 1987 CDC definition; (c) the December 1992 definition; (d) the December 1996 definition quoted above; and (e) the African Bangui definition (for which no HIV positivity is required.)] The definition is also incomplete, since it does not provide a list of the diseases or conditions in "the group of diseases or conditions". Purported statistics not taking into account inconsistent and incomplete definitions are worthless and misleading.

One could of course raise more precise empirical questions, for instance how many overall cases of Kaposi's sarcoma (resp. cervical cancer) are there in the US in a given period, with the following additional condition that the person is HIV positive, (resp. HIV negative), and has (resp. has not) immunosuppression. The categories used for the CDC statistics at present in connection with AIDS constitute obstructions to dealing with this more precise question. These statistics are systematically biased in favor of HIV pathogeny.

3. Does "living with AIDS" mean being sick or does it mean only being HIV positive, or what? In any case, many people have a low CD4 T-cell count, are HIV positive, but in every other respect are healthy. Are these people "living with AIDS"?

4. There is also another group, a control group never mentioned as far as I can tell in the CDC publication, about HIV negative people with a low CD4 T-cell count and tests HIV negative; is that person regarded as sick by the CDC, and is there a "Surveillance Report" on such persons? If not, then the CDC statistics are ipso facto biased in favor of the HIV pathogeny hypothesis.

5. The variation of figures, depending on the pre-1987 definition, the 1987 definition, the December 1992 definition, and the latest December 1996 definition on the front page of the Surveillance Report create such a chaos that just on this count, the whole production is questionable. I call it statistical garbage. Furthermore, the statistics are anyhow manipulated in other ways. Cf. item 9 below, for instance.

6. The figure of "581,429 persons with AIDS" reported to CDC p. 5, first paragraph, is a garbage figure. First, it is not clear what AIDS means in this figure, i.e. which definition was used. Second, the figure is cumulative, so presumably it depends on different definitions over 15 years.

7. To what extent is Table 11 on p.17 contradicting other tables, e.g. the graph on the first page?

8. Although there are occasional categories about injective drug users, there are no categories for the poppers or cocaine users. The absence of such categories biases the drug statistics in favor of the HIV pathogeny hypothesis and against the drug pathogeny hypothesis.

9. The use of "statistical methods" p.5, column 1, line -2, in plain english means that statistics were manipulated in some undetermined way, so again, what does the figure 581,429 mean? Down to the last unit digit?

10. p. 5 second column, line -10, -8, what do the expressions "living with HIV infection or AIDS" and "living with AIDS" mean? What does "diagnosed with HIV disease" mean?

The CDC Report is written under the unstated axiom that there is such a thing as "HIV disease", whatever that means. Then officials try to fit experimental facts into this axiom, and are thereby led to what are euphemistically called "paradoxes", actually inconsistencies and contradictions.

etc., etc., etc

Serge Lang

A copy of the 1996 CDC HIV/AIDS "Surveillance" Report can be found at the following address:

www.cdc.gov/nchstp/hiv_aids/stats/hasrlink.htm