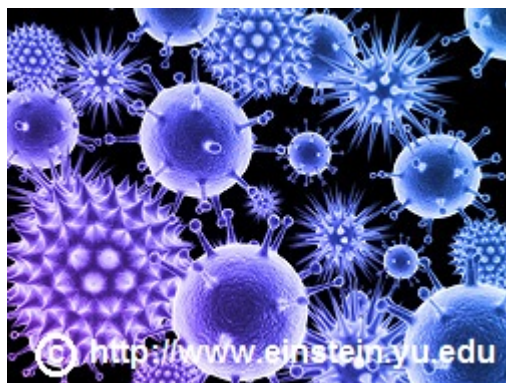


# History of HIV & AIDS in the U.S.A

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The history of HIV and AIDS in the USA began in 1981, when the United States of America became the first country to officially recognise a strange new illness among a small number of gay men. Today, it is generally accepted that the origin of AIDS probably lies in Africa. However, the USA was the first country to bring AIDS into the public consciousness and the American reaction undoubtedly contributed to the establishment of AIDS as one of the most politicised, feared and controversial diseases in the history of modern medicine - a reputation that stands today.

At the beginning of the 1980s various reports began to emerge in California and New York of a small number of men who had been diagnosed with rare forms of cancer and/or

The cancer, Kaposi's Sarcoma, normally only affected elderly men of Mediterranean or Jewish heritage and young adult African men. The pneumonia, Pneumocystis Pneumonia Carinii (PCP), is generally only found in individuals with seriously compromised immune systems. However, the men were young and had previously been in relatively good health. The only other characteristic that connected them was that they were all gay.

The first official documentation of the condition was published by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on 5th June 1981. 1 Entitled "Pneumocystis Pneumonia – Los Angeles", the report detailed the cases of five young gay men hospitalised with serious PCP, cytomegalovirus, and disseminated candida infections.

"I heard on UPI, it was like a paragraph or two, a very short report from the Centers for Disease Control that there was a new phenomenon of people dying of an unusual pneumonia, and they happen to be homosexual." - Hank Wilson, living in San Francisco. 2

Almost a month after the CDC's announcement, the New York Times reported that a total of 41 homosexual men had been diagnosed with Kaposi's Sarcoma, eight of whom had died less than 24 months after the diagnosis was made.

Read more at: <http://www.avert.org/history-hiv-aids-usa.htm#sthash.MCJFhwIT.dpuf>