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THE POLLS—A REPORT

AIDS

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In 1981, a new, mysterious, and deadly disease known as AIDS was identified. At present there is no cure for it and no vaccine to prevent its transmission. Efforts to control the spread of AIDS are hampered by the long latency between infection and symptoms (an average of at least four years) and by the fact that once an individual is exposed to the virus presumed to cause AIDS, he or she can infect others without knowing it. The disease has been termed a pandemic; by 1986, 1.5 to 2 million people in the United States were believed to have been exposed to it.

To the best of our knowledge, the first survey of public opinion about AIDS was carried out in June 1983. Between then and November 1986, the cutoff date for this article, we identified 22 surveys on this topic. Four were carried out in 1983, nine in 1985, and another nine in 1986. Almost all have been nationwide, and they represent more than 200 questions that the public has answered about AIDS—what they know about the disease, how vulnerable they think they are, what they think the government should do, and what, if anything, they are doing to protect themselves. These data provide the best gauge we have of the public's knowledge about and reaction to AIDS and how their concerns and views may be changing.

In selecting questions for this article, our main criterion was the availability of trend data. In some cases, however, we have reported responses to items for which there are as yet no trends, because we believe they are likely to be asked again in the future.

We have organized this summary of the poll results in terms of six dimensions: awareness of the disease, concern about it both as a seri-

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ous medical problem in general and as a problem for one's own health, perceptions about the likelihood of its spread, beliefs about methods of transmission, attitudes toward measures for protecting the public, and reported changes in one's own behavior to avoid exposure.

Between June 1983 and August 1986, the percentage of the population who said that they had heard or read about AIDS increased from 77% to 99%. There are now virtually no differences among demographic categories in the percentage of those aware of AIDS. During the same period of time, the percentage who personally knew someone with AIDS increased only from 3% to 6%, though in cities with a high concentration of AIDS cases, the percentage was much higher. In New York City, for example, it was 16% in September 1985.

Media coverage appears to have obliterated the "awareness gap" between population subgroups, but other gaps in knowledge still exist. For example, those with the least amount of education are least likely to be well informed about methods of transmission. And those with less accurate knowledge about how AIDS can be transmitted are much more likely to express concern that they or someone they know will get AIDS, to say that they or someone they know avoids places frequented by homosexuals, and to favor government regulations, including quarantine for people with AIDS.

At the same time, those who are realistically at greater risk are also most likely to express concern about AIDS. Young people—those under thirty, single people, those living in urban areas in which a high number of cases has been identified, and blacks all express greater than average concern about contracting AIDS. They are also more likely to say they have changed their behavior, including sexual behavior, in order to avoid exposure to AIDS. Because of the lack of space, we have not shown these demographic breaks, but they are consistent across all surveys for which we have seen the data.

So far as the spread of AIDS is concerned, the data summarized below indicate no trend of increasing concern about AIDS as a problem for one's own health. But some (though not all) questions indicate increasing concern about the spread of AIDS beyond present at-risk groups to the general population.

The data on beliefs about transmission indicate widespread accuracy at the extremes, with some confusion about intermediate modes. For example, virtually everyone knows that AIDS can be transmitted by sexual contact, both homosexual and heterosexual, and by blood transfusions. At the other extreme, virtually no one believes that it can be contracted by being in the same room as someone who has AIDS. But with respect to kissing, sharing a drinking glass, and eating food prepared by someone who has AIDS, public opinion is divided. Substantial minorities express the belief that AIDS can be transmitted in these

ways even though public health experts insist that it cannot. And as of late 1986 there did not appear to have been any increase in accuracy over time.

The evidence is mixed with regard to attitudes toward regulation. On some matters, such as fighting to have a child with AIDS removed from school, the percentage saying they would fight has decreased over time. On other matters, such as taking school employees with AIDS off the job, the percentage saying employees should be removed has increased. And on still other matters, such as favoring quarantine for those infected with AIDS, there appears to have been no change in aggregate opinion over time.

There is a slight increase in the number of those reporting that they are changing their behavior as a result of AIDS. Gallup, for example, finds a small but steady increase in the percentage saying that they or people they know avoid homosexuals, stay away from places where homosexuals may be present, and refuse elective surgery that would require blood transfusions. (Another behavioral indicator, not reflected in these opinion data, is the increasing recommendation of some doctors that patients donate their own blood prior to surgery.)

The data also provide evidence that the public credits the media as being an important source of information about AIDS. In response to questions by the *Los Angeles Times* (December 1985), 25% of the public said that they had been "paying most attention recently" to stories about AIDS in the media, and this figure was higher than that for any of the other seven topics they were asked about, including hijackings and the budget deficit. In fact, 72% reported hearing about or reading three or more stories about AIDS "in the last seven days." In the last half of 1985, a time when eight of the surveys whose findings are summarized here were conducted, the evening newscasts of the major networks were carrying an average of almost twenty stories per month on AIDS.¹

One cannot, of course, say that the public's answers to poll questions mirror what the media have reported. The public remembers some things and not others, and they add to and subtract from what they have heard or read. At the same time, different media build up some stories and downplay or ignore others. Despite all of this selectivity and distortion, the poll data reveal that the general population is aware of AIDS and has some basic knowledge about how the disease spreads. In addition, those realistically at greater risk are the ones most likely to say that they are concerned about contracting the disease. There is variation from survey to survey in question wording and in the number and type of response categories, but, on balance, we see more

¹As compiled from *Television and Abstracts: A Guide to the Videotape Collection of the Network Evening News Programs* in the Vanderbilt Television Archives. There was some variation among the three networks, but not a great deal.

agreement than disagreement across surveys in the public's answers.

Because information and education are the only means now available to control the spread of AIDS, the poll results are of interest to the public health community. From this standpoint, they provide good information about the public's awareness and level of knowledge. But the data are of limited utility in one important way: they are less informative than they might be about changes in behavior to avoid exposure to the AIDS virus. Only seven of the surveys asked specific questions about precautionary measures, if any, that the respondent was taking. The lack of such items and the paucity of trend data in this area are a weakness.

The poll results reported here were obtained from published and unpublished sources, the Roper Center, survey organizations, ABC, CBS, and NBC, *Newsweek*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. With the exception of two New York City surveys (ABC/DN 9/85 and Gallup 6/85), all surveys are based on nationwide samples. The sample sizes are at least 1,000 for all but the following six surveys:

Gallup	7/1983	N = 767
Gallup	8/1985	N = 759
Gallup	11/1986	N = 756
ABC/ <i>New York Daily News</i>	9/1985	N = 505
CBS/ <i>New York Times</i>	9/1985	N = 762
CBS	10/1986	N = 823

Responses totaling less than 0.5% have not been shown in the tabulations.

We wish to thank the organizations that shared unpublished data with us for this article. Further information about the surveys can be obtained from the appropriate organization.

- ABC/DN—American Broadcasting Company/*New York Daily News*
- ABC/WP—American Broadcasting Company/*Washington Post*
- CBS—Columbia Broadcasting System
- CBS/NYT—Columbia Broadcasting System/*New York Times*
- Gallup—The Gallup Organization
- Harris—Louis Harris and Associates
- LAT—*Los Angeles Times*
- NBC/WSJ—National Broadcasting Company/*Wall Street Journal*
- Roper—The Roper Organization
- YCS—Yankelovich, Clancy, and Shulman

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Contact: Direct and Indirect

Roper: Have you heard about the disease called AIDS that attacks a person's disease immunity system and is frequently fatal?

	8/83	8/85	8/86
Yes	91%	97%	99%
No	8	2	1
DK	1	1	1

Gallup: Have you heard or read about a disease called AIDS—acquired immune deficiency syndrome?

	6/83	7/83	6/85	3/86
Yes	77%	91%	95%	98%
No	23	9	5	2

ABC/WP, ABC/DN, CBS/NYT, LAT, CBS, Gallup: Do you personally know anyone who has AIDS?

	<i>ABC/WP</i> ^a	<i>Gallup</i> ^b	<i>ABC/WP</i> ^c	<i>ABC/DN</i> ^c	<i>CBS/NYT</i>	<i>LAT</i> ^d	<i>CBS</i>	<i>Gallup</i>
Yes	6/83	8/85	9/85	9/85	9/85	12/85	10/86	11/86
No	3%	4%	6%	16%	2%	5%	5%	6%
DK/No op.	97	96	94	84	98	94	94	94
	—	—	—	1	—	1	1	—

^a Do you know anyone who suffers from AIDS?

^b Do you personally know anyone who has contracted the disease called AIDS?

^c Do you personally know anyone, either living or dead, who contracted AIDS?

^d Do you personally know anyone who has tested positive for AIDS, or has contracted AIDS?

By "know," I mean someone who you would speak with at least once a month on the phone or in person.

Concern About AIDS as a Serious Medical Problem and Problem for Own Health

CBS/NYT, CBS: Think about some serious diseases or medical problems facing the country today. Which two or three do you think are the most serious?*

	<i>CBS/NYT</i>	<i>CBS</i>
	9/85	10/86
Cancer	74%	75%
AIDS	51	55
Heart disease	41	38
Substance abuse	2	6
VD/Herpes	5	4
Diabetes	5	4

* Only the most frequently mentioned diseases are shown here. Multiple answers were allowed.

CBS/NYT, LAT, CBS: Now think about *your own* situation. Which two or three diseases or medical problems are *you* most concerned about getting?*

	<i>CBS/NYT**</i>	<i>LAT***</i>	<i>CBS**</i>
	9/85	12/85	10/86
Cancer	59%	56%	64%
Heart disease	31	11	31
AIDS	13	12	12
VD/herpes	—	—	—
Diabetes	5	3	6

* Only the most frequently mentioned diseases are shown here.

** Multiple answers were allowed.

*** Alternatives were enumerated for respondents; only one response was allowed.

LAT: 12/85: What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today: crime, or AIDS, or government spending, or inflation, or the moral decline of society, or unemployment, or the possibility of war, or what?

	<i>Knowledge of AIDS</i>		<i>Fear of AIDS</i>		<i>All*</i>
	<i>High</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Low</i>	
Crime	14%	18%	17%	15%	26%
Education	11	9	9	10	16
AIDS	5	5	9	4	8
Budget	19	18	15	20	30
Inflation	8	8	10	9	14
Morals	10	10	7	11	17
Unemployment	13	14	16	12	23
War	14	10	12	12	20
Others	5	5	3	6	8
Not sure	1	3	1	1	2
Refused	0	0	1	0	0

* Up to two responses were recorded for each respondent. Subgroup percentages are for most important problem only.

Gallup: Are there any new public health problems which especially concern you?

	7/83	8/85
Yes	41%	44%
No	58	55
DK	1	1
If yes, which ones?*		
AIDS	24	32
Herpes	14	4
Pollution/toxic waste	1	2
Other	13	12
DK	1	1

* Alternatives not enumerated for respondents; more than one response allowed.

NBC: How concerned are you about AIDS as a problem to your own health? Would you say you are very concerned, somewhat concerned, or not at all concerned?

	11/85	1/86*
Very concerned	27%	26%
Somewhat concerned	32	35
Not at all concerned	40	38
Not sure	1	1

* No difference by whether or not respondent has homosexual friends.

Concern About Spread

Gallup: Lately there has been some discussion in the news about the disease called AIDS. How worried are you that you or someone you know will get AIDS?

	8/85	11/86
Very	14%	19%
A little	27	25
Not very	27	25
Not at all	31	30
DK	1	1

ABC/WP, ABC/DN, CBS/NYT, Harris, CBS: Are you afraid that you might get AIDS?

	<i>ABC/WP</i> ^a	<i>ABC/DN</i> ^a	<i>CBS/NYT</i>	<i>Harris</i> ^b	<i>CBS</i>
	9/85	9/85	9/85	11/85	10/86
Yes	26%	42%	17%	10%	15%
No	73	57	79	87	83
DK/no opinion	1	1	4	3	2

^a Are you afraid that you might pick up the AIDS virus yourself or aren't you afraid of that?

^b Do you think that *you* run any risk of catching AIDS, or not?

CBS/NYT, NBC: So far, most of the people with AIDS have been homosexual men and intravenous drug users. Do you think AIDS will spread beyond those groups who already get it so that many people in the rest of the population will get AIDS, or don't you think so?

	<i>CBS/NYT</i>	<i>NBC</i> ^a
	9/85	1/86
Yes, will spread	61%	76%
No	20	15
Depends (vol.)	7	—
DK	12	9

^a As of now, most of the people with AIDS in the U.S. are homosexual men and intravenous drug users. Do you think AIDS will spread beyond these groups so that other people in the country will get AIDS, or don't you think so?

ABC/WP, ABC/DN: So far three-quarters of AIDS victims have been homosexual males. The rest of the victims have mainly been drug addicts or recipients of blood transfusions. Do you think that AIDS is spreading so that it is now a threat to the general public in the U.S. or not?

	<i>ABC/WP</i>	<i>ABC/DN</i>
	9/85	9/85
Yes	79%	79%
No	18	17
DK	4	4

Gallup: At the moment, cases of AIDS are largely confined to homosexuals, hemophiliacs, other people receiving blood transfusions, and intravenous drug takers. How likely do you think it is that AIDS will eventually become an epidemic for the public at large?

	8/85	11/86 ^a
Very likely	27%	36%
Somewhat	35	37
Not too likely	26	18
Not at all	7	5
DK	5	4

^a How likely do you think it is that AIDS will eventually become an epidemic for the public at large?

ABC/WP: To the best of your knowledge, is the number of diagnosed cases of AIDS in the U.S. closer to a million or closer to 10,000?

	9/85
Closer to a million	29%
Closer to 10,000	63
DK/no opinion	8

LAT: From what you have heard and read, how many people in the United States have been exposed to the AIDS virus and will therefore test positive for the presence of AIDS antibodies? Just your best guess.

	12/85
To 2m	49%
To 26m	12
To 50m	4
To 74m	2
To 98m	1
To 122m	2
To 146m	1
To 170m	0
To 194m	0
To 218m	0
To 240m	1
Refused	28

Methods of Transmission

I'm going to read you a list. For each item, please tell me if you think that it is or is not a way for someone to catch AIDS from someone who has it. Can you catch AIDS from:

(The introduction and precise wording of the mode of transmission varies slightly from survey to survey.)

	<i>Gallup</i> 7/83	<i>ABC/</i> <i>WP</i> 9/85	<i>ABC/</i> <i>DN</i> 9/85	<i>CBS/</i> <i>NYT</i> 9/85	<i>NBC</i> 11/85	<i>LAT</i> 12/85	<i>NBC</i> 1/86	<i>Gallup</i> 4/86	<i>CBS</i> 10/86	<i>Gallup</i> 11/86
Casual contact										
Yes	25%							6% ^a		17% ^b
No	59							81		78
DK	16							13		5
Intimate sexual contact (having sex)										
Yes	95%	95%	91%				63%*		93%	79% ^c 91% ^d
No	2	3	2				25		1	10 3
DK	4	2	7				12		6	11 6
Blood transfusion										
Yes	95%	97%	95%				55%*			
No	2	2	1				33			
DK	2	2	4				12			
Sharing (using) intravenous (hypodermic) needles										
Yes	92%	95%	91%							
No	3	3	2							
DK	5	3	7							
Kissing										
Yes	50%	56%	32%						29%	
No	36	28	42						51	
DK	14	16	26						20	
Using same drinking glass										
Yes	28%	38%	47%	33%			38%		36%	
No	55	45	34	44			45		43	
DK	16	17	19	23			17		21	
Being sneezed on										
Yes	22%	33%					32%			
No	62	50					53			
DK	16	17					15			
Sitting on a toilet seat										
Yes	16%	26%	28%		24%				23%	
No	69	60	49		63				57	
DK	15	14	23		13				20	
Shaking hands (being touched)										
Yes	7%	7%	11%							
No	85	86	73							
DK	9	7	16							
Working (being) in the same office (room) with someone who has AIDS										
Yes			12%	5%					6%	
No			70	84					81	
DK			18	11					13	
Donating blood										
Yes							33%			
No							63			
DK							4			
Food handling or preparation										
Yes				29%	19%	31%*				
No				47	65	55				
DK				24	16	14				

* Asked only of those who think it will spread. Percentages have been converted to total sample.

^a Do you believe a person can get AIDS by being in a crowded place with someone who has it?

^b Casual contact, such as sharing a water glass, shaking hands, or riding in the same elevator with a person who has AIDS.

^c Heterosexual contact with a person whose blood has tested positive for AIDS.

^d Heterosexual contact with a person who has an active case of AIDS.

ABC/WP, ABC/DN: Assuming there is no intimate physical contact, do you think it is safe or unsafe to associate with someone who has AIDS?

	<i>ABC/WP</i>	<i>ABC/DN</i>
	<i>9/85</i>	<i>9/85</i>
Yes, safe	57%	46%
No, unsafe	36	44
DK	7	10

Gallup: I am going to read you some statements about AIDS. For each, please tell me if you think the statement is probably true or if you think it is probably false? Think it is probably true that:

	<i>6/85</i>	<i>(NYC) 6/85</i>
Some people can get AIDS when they receive blood transfusions	92%	90%
Drug users who share needles have a high risk of getting AIDS	84	86
Most people who have AIDS are homosexual men	80	73
Some wives and girlfriends of drug users have gotten AIDS	68	71
There is a great danger that AIDS will soon spread to all kinds of people in our country	66	69
You can get AIDS by being in a crowded place with someone who has it	9	15

LAT, CBS: There is a test to determine whether or not a person has the AIDS virus. As far as you know, does everyone with a positive test for the AIDS virus get AIDS, or not?

	<i>LAT^a</i>	<i>CBS</i>
	<i>12/85</i>	<i>10/86</i>
Yes	28%	10%
No	29	54
DK/no opinion	42	36
Refused	1	—

^a Medical researchers have discovered a virus that is closely linked with AIDS, called HTLV Three. Like all viruses, this one causes the body's immune system to manufacture antibodies which fight the virus. From what you have heard or read, is it your impression that a person who tests positive to these antibodies will probably get AIDS?

Gallup: Next I have some questions about screening tests for AIDS. As far as you know, when someone without any AIDS symptoms tests positive for AIDS virus antibodies in the blood, does this mean the person . . .

	<i>11/86</i>
Has been exposed to the virus, but is not necessarily infectious to others or likely to develop the disease?	37%
Is infectious to others and may develop the disease?	29
Is infectious to others and is certain to develop the disease?	11
DK	23

Protective Measures: Regulation of Others

WORK

NBC: Do you think employers should be able to fire someone who has been diagnosed as having AIDS, or not?

	<i>11/85</i>
Yes	19%
No	64
DK/not sure/no opinion	17

NBC: Do you think people who have been diagnosed as having AIDS should be allowed to continue to work as long as they are able to, or don't you think so?

	<i>11/85</i>
Yes	67%
No	18
DK/not sure/no opinion	15

CBS: Should there be a law restricting where people with the AIDS virus can work, even though public health officials don't think that would control the spread of AIDS?

	<i>10/86</i>
Yes	28%
No	59
DK/not sure/no opinion	13

SCHOOL

ABC/WP, *ABC/DN*, *CBS/NYT*, *CBS*: Do you favor or oppose allowing students with AIDS to attend school if health officials say there is no danger?

	<i>ABC/WP</i>	<i>ABC/DN</i> ^a	<i>CBS/NYT</i> ^b	<i>CBS</i> ^b
	<i>9/85</i>	<i>9/85</i>	<i>9/85</i>	<i>10/86</i>
Favor	62%	39%	40%	56%
Oppose	31	55	27	17
DK/no opinion	7	6	17	15
Depends (volunteered)	—	—	16	12

^a Recently, New York City public school officials allowed a 7-year-old child with AIDS to attend class in Queens. Do you favor or oppose . . . ?

^b Should children who have AIDS be allowed to go to school, or not?

ABC/WP, *ABC/DN*, *Gallup*: If you thought a child with AIDS might be in your children's school, would you keep your children home or would you send them to school?

	<i>ABC/WP</i>	<i>ABC/DN</i> ^a	<i>Gallup</i> ^b
	<i>9/85</i>	<i>9/85</i>	<i>3/86</i>
Keep home	26%	48%	24%
Send to school	68	46	67
DK/no opinion	6	6	9

^a Many parents in Queens protested allowing the child with AIDS to attend school by keeping their own children home. If you thought a child with AIDS might be in your children's school, would you keep your children home or would you send them to school?

^b A 14-year-old Indiana boy who contracted AIDS through a contaminated blood transfusion was banned from attending school classes. After a county medical officer ruled that he posed no health threat to his classmates, he went back to school, but the parents of almost half the students at his school kept their children home. If you had children of this age, would you permit them to attend classes with a child who had AIDS, or not?

Gallup: If you learned that a child with AIDS was attending the same school as a child of yours, would you:

	<i>8/85</i>	<i>11/86</i>
Fight to have the AIDS child removed from school?	17%	10%
Keep your child at home?	8	7
Instruct your child not to have contact with the AIDS child?	25	27
Not worry about children passing AIDS to one another?	30	44
Don't know	20	12

ABC/WP, ABC/DN: School officials should tell parents if a child with AIDS is attending their child's school. Do you agree or disagree?

	<i>ABC/WP</i>	<i>ABC/DN</i>
	<i>9/85</i>	<i>9/85</i>
Agree	78%	79%
Disagree	19	18
DK/no opinion	3	3

Public school employees found to have AIDS should be taken off the job.

Agree	47%	66%
Disagree	45	26
DK/no opinion	8	9

HOUSING

ABC/WP, ABC/DN: If it was proposed that an AIDS patient treatment and housing center be located in your neighborhood, would that upset you a great deal, only somewhat, very little, or not at all?

	<i>ABC/WP</i>	<i>ABC/DN</i>
	<i>9/85</i>	<i>9/85</i>
A great deal	17%	19%
Only somewhat	27	28
Very little	23	20
Not at all	30	31
DK/no opinion	1	2

QUARANTINE

ABC/WP, ABC/DN, LAT, NBC: People with AIDS should be put into quarantine in special places to keep them away from the general public.

	<i>ABC/WP</i>	<i>ABC/DN</i>	<i>LAT^a</i>	<i>NBC^b</i>
	9/85	9/85	12/85	1/86
Agree	28%	42%	51%	31%
Disagree	65	48	40	57
DK/no opinion	7	10	9	12

^a Would you favor or oppose adding "AIDS" to the list of diseases that must be quarantined?

^b Do you think that people who are known carriers of AIDS should be separated from the rest of the population, or don't you think so?

REGULATION OF SEXUAL ACTIVITIES

NBC: Do you think governmental restrictions should be placed on the sexual activities of people who are known carriers of AIDS, or don't you think so?

	<i>11/85</i>	<i>1/86</i>
Yes	58%	51%
No	31	41
DK/no opinion	11	8

YCS: There should be no laws, either federal or state, regulating sexual practices—that's up to the individual to decide for himself or herself.

	<i>1977</i>	<i>7/86</i>
Agree strongly	45%	44%
Agree partially	25	25
Disagree	26	27
Not sure	4	4

TESTING

NBC, CBS: Do you think the U.S military should test its personnel to see if they have been exposed to AIDS, or not?

	<i>NBC</i>	<i>CBS^a</i>
	<i>11/85</i>	<i>10/86</i>
Yes	78%	72%
No	16	21
DK/no opinion	6	7

^a Do you think that testing for the AIDS virus should be required for people beginning military service, or don't you think so?

NBC: Do you think employers should test their employees to see if they have been exposed to the AIDS virus, or not?

	<i>11/85</i>
Yes	39%*
No	45
DK/no opinion	16

* Currently employed: 34%.

CBS: Would you favor a national policy that requires workers in general to be tested for the AIDS virus, or would that be an unfair invasion of privacy?

	<i>10/86</i>
Yes, favor	36%
No	53
Depends (vol.)	6
No opinion	5

CBS: Do you think insurance companies should be permitted to require people in groups with a high risk of getting AIDS to be tested for the AIDS virus before giving them insurance coverage, or is that unfair to people in these groups?

	<i>10/86</i>
Yes	40%
No	50
No opinion	10

EDUCATION

YCS: At what age do you think that children should *first* be taught about AIDS in school?*

	<i>11/86</i>
By the age of 8	23%
When 9 or 10	27
When 11 or 12	25
When 13 or 14	17
Or older than this	5
Not sure	3

Do you think that sex education courses for children who are eight should include information about:

	<i>Yes**</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Not Sure</i>
The dangers of AIDS	38%	56%	6%

Do you think that sex education courses for children who are twelve should include information about:

	<i>Yes**</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Not Sure</i>
The dangers of AIDS	93%	6%	1%

* Among those who agree that children should be taught about AIDS in school—83% of sample.

** Among those who think that sex education courses should be taught in school—86% of sample.

Gallup: Some people feel that an important way to combat AIDS is to provide more education in grade school about sex and sexually transmitted diseases, including the use of condoms, before students become sexually active. Others feel that this kind of education does more harm than good. Which comes closer to your view?

	<i>11/86</i>
More sex education	70%
Does more harm than good	25
DK	5

Protective Measures: Behavior Change

ABC/DN, ABC/WP, CBS/NYT, Harris, NBC, CBS: Is there anything in particular you have done to avoid getting AIDS?

	<i>ABC/DN</i> ^a	<i>ABC/WP</i> ^a	<i>CBS/NYT</i>	<i>Harris</i> ^{*b}	<i>NBC</i> ^{*c}	<i>NBC</i> ^d	<i>CBS</i>	<i>CBS</i> ^e
	9/85	9/85	9/85	11/85	11/85	1/86	10/86	10/86
Yes	35%	22%	13%	41%	11%	7%	18%	11%
No	65	77	85	57	88	93	80	86
DK	—	1	2	2	1	—	2	3

* No follow-up questions asked

^a Is there anything you yourself are doing to avoid exposing yourself to AIDS?

^b Do you take any special steps or precautions to avoid catching AIDS, or not?

^c Has public concern about AIDS caused you to change any part of your daily routine?

^d Since you became aware of AIDS, have you changed your sexual behavior in any way?

^e How about you personally? Have you changed your sexual habits because you are worried about getting AIDS?

If yes, what have you done?

	<i>ABC/DN</i> ^a	<i>ABC/WP</i> ^a	<i>CBS/NYT</i> ^b	<i>NBC</i> ^c	<i>CBS</i> ^b	<i>CBS</i> ^b
	9/85	9/85	9/85	1/86	10/86	10/86
Limit number of partners	8%	6%	—	92%	—	—
Sex with one partner	8	10	—	—	3%	2%
Avoid homosexual acts/sex	—	—	1%	—	1	—
Cut down on sex	11	11	—	—	—	—
No sex	2	2	3	—	1	—
Use/partner use condom	2	2	—	49	—	—
Avoid homosexuals	13	17	1	—	—	—
Avoid people with AIDS	—	6	—	—	—	—
Avoid prostitutes	—	1	—	—	—	—
Socially careful	—	14	2	—	2	—
Careful who/what touch	—	—	1	—	3	—
Avoid needle drugs	—	6	—	—	—	—
Keep clean	—	5	1	—	3	—
Clean home/office more	—	1	—	—	—	—
Change public places I go	—	1	—	—	—	—
Avoid/more careful using public restrooms, etc.	—	25	1	—	—	—
Avoid/more careful using gyms, public pools, etc.	—	3	—	—	—	—
Use restrooms less	—	4	—	—	—	—
Avoid blood transfusions	—	11	1	—	1	—
Cut down/not giving blood	—	3	—	—	—	—
More careful/more careful selecting sexual partner	—	—	—	95	—	7
Other	77	12	—	—	4	1
No opinion	—	3	2	—	—	1

^a More than one response allowed. Percentages are of those saying yes.

^b Only one response coded. Percentages sum to those saying yes.

^c Respondents were specifically asked if they had done these three behaviors. Percentages are of those saying yes, they had done.

Gallup: Have you personally or have people that you know taken any of the following precautions to try to reduce the chances of contracting AIDS?

		7/83 ^a	8/85	11/86
Avoiding people you know or suspect to be homosexuals?	Yes		13%	18%
	No		77	72
	DK		10	10
Refusing elective surgery that would require blood transfusions?	Yes		21	27
	No		70	65
	DK		9	8
Taking any other precautions?	Yes		6	
	No		87	
	DK		7	
Using a condom?*	Yes			32
	No			55
	DK			13
Taking more care in choice of sex partners?*	Yes			58
	No			34
	DK			8
Avoiding certain places where homosexuals may be present?	Yes	21%	28	33
	No	67	65	55
	DK	12	7	8

* No trend information.

^a Are you or other people in your community taking extra steps to avoid being in places where homosexuals are likely to be, or not?