

What's in a Name? HIV/AIDS Hysteria (1980s)

1981

"Rare cancer seen in 41 homosexuals" article runs in The New York Times on July 3rd. Disease is labeled as Kaposi's Sarcoma in the article. By the end of the year at least 121 men had died from the disease.



1982

Mid

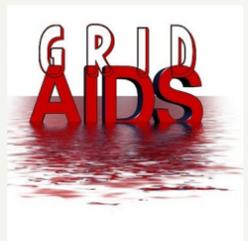
In June 1982, a report in the NYT called "Clue Found on Homosexuals' Precancer Syndrome" on gay men in Southern California suggested that a sexually transmitted infectious agent might be the etiological agent. The syndrome was initially termed "GRID," or "gay-related immune deficiency," or "gay cancer." 4H Disease first appears in press.



1982

End

By August 1982, the disease was being referred to by its new CDC-coined name: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Michael Callen and Richard Berkowitz published How to Have Sex in an Epidemic, which helped spread the idea that safe sex could be used as protection against the disease.



1984

April 23, U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Margaret Heckler announces at a press conference that an American scientist, Robert Gallo, has discovered the probable cause of AIDS. She also declares that a vaccine will be available within two years.



1985

September 17, during his second term in office, US President Ronald Reagan publicly mentions AIDS for the first time when asked about the lack of medical research funding by an AP reporter during a press conference.



1986

HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is adopted as name of the retrovirus that was first proposed as the cause of AIDS by Luc Montagnier of France, who named it LAV (lymphadenopathy associated virus) and Robert Gallo of the United States, who named it HTLV-III (human T-lymphotropic virus type III).



1987

AZT (zidovudine), the first antiretroviral drug, becomes available to treat HIV. In March, the direct action advocacy group ACT UP is founded by Larry Kramer in New York City. March 1, 1987, Dr. Peter Duesberg of the University of California, Berkeley publishes "Retroviruses as Carcinogens and Pathogens: Expectations and Reality." The article challenges the hypothesis that HIV causes AIDS, launching the "AIDS denialist movement"



1988

May, C. Everett Koop sends an eight-page, condensed version of his Surgeon General's Report on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome report named Understanding AIDS to all 107,000,000 households in the United States, becoming the first federal authority to provide explicit advice to US citizens on how to protect themselves from AIDS.

