Institute offers AIDS testing

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We asked the question of the day, "What's next?" and Goldstein, the patient is first examined for the presence of diseases and conditions of the immune system which would normally be fought off by the body's immune system. If these infections are present, the patient's blood is tested for the virus, which causes AIDS.

The AIDS virus is spread by intimate contact with infected bodily fluids, primarily blood, blood products and semen (see sidebar). Because all donated blood is now routinely screened for the AIDS antibody, the primary mode of transmission for the disease is believed to be sexual contact.

The Medical Department "pushes the use of condoms" in both homosexual and heterosexual intercourse in order to avoid infection, Goldstein said. A monogamous lifestyle is "probably best," he added, "but condoms at least provide a barrier to the virus."

Male homosexuals were among those first affected by AIDS in the U.S., and more than half of all AIDS victims in this country are members of that group. A memo of a group at MIT (GAMIT), which did not wish to be identified, states members of that organization are "very well informed" about the modes of transmission of the disease. No member of the GAMIIT has contracted AIDS, he said.

Spokesmen from the AIDS Action Committee, which provides information about AIDS and support for AIDS patients, have spoken to members of GAMIT during GAMIT's regularly scheduled meetings. Copies of "Safe Sex," a pamphlet outlining the relative risks of different sexual practices, are available in the GAMIT lounge.

Any student who believes he or she has been exposed to AIDS may ask to be tested by the MIT Medical Department. The results of the test, whether positive or negative, will be entered on the student's permanent MIT medical record. The Medical Department will also provide the location of other testing centers to people who do not wish their test results to be recorded.

Students who donate blood through the TCA blood drive will automatically have their blood tested for the AIDS antibody. The donor will be contacted by the Red Cross if the test is positive.

If positive, the donor will be referred to the MIT Medical Department for any further tests. The donor will also be referred to the GAMIIT lounge. Information about AIDS is also available through the Dean's Office.

Transmission of AIDS

(Continued from page 1)

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