

Aids increase predicted

There may be a big increase in the number of people suffering from Aids, experts at a government laboratory warned yesterday.

The microbiologists, who carried out tests on 2,150 "at risk" patients, said the results showed that the virus had rapidly become widespread among homosexuals attending sexually transmitted disease clinics and among haemophiliacs receiving pooled blood products. The virus attacks the body's immune system.

The tests, carried out at the central public health laboratory in north London, involved patients from different areas. More than a third of the ho-

mosexuals tested in London and 5 per cent of those in five other centres had been exposed to the virus, as had 38 per cent of the haemophiliacs.

Although the Aids outbreak appeared to be small in Britain, the trend was constantly upward and there would soon be a considerable increase in the number of sufferers, the four experts added in the British Medical Journal.

The spread of the infection among homosexuals could only be avoided if they strictly limited the numbers of their sexual partners and prevented the transfer of semen.

The article said that there

was insufficient provision for the advice and treatment of infected patients.

Penny Chorlton adds: Two new American studies support the growing belief that Aids can be transmitted through heterosexual contact. The latest groups of people who have been found to pass on the virus include spouses and prostitutes.

Details of the two studies, in New York and Washington were given at the close of the three-day international conference on Aids in Atlanta, Georgia.

The conference was told that at least six anti-viral agents are being tested.