

Headline **Haemophiliacs appeal to US court over Hiv-tainted drug**
Date **21 Oct 2009**
MediaTitle **The Sun**
Section **National**
Journalist **N/A**
Frequency **Daily**
Circ / Read **174,179 / 171,000**

Language **English**
Page No **8**
Article Size **106 cm²**
Color **Black/white**
ADValue **1,272**
PRValue **3,816**



Haemophiliacs appeal to US court over HIV-tainted drug

TAIPEI: A group of Taiwanese HIV patients are appealing against a US court decision barring them from suing pharmaceutical giant Bayer which they blame for their plight, their lawyer said yesterday. The patients, who are haemophiliacs, say they contracted the deadly virus from blood products sold here in the 1980s by US-headquartered Cutter, owned by Bayer, according to Michael Baum, their lead attorney.

The Illinois Federal Court recently ruled that the Taiwan cases were barred by the statute of limitations, although the Taiwanese patients had won a motion to proceed in California in January.

"We have filed notices of appeal," said Baum, of Los Angeles-based law firm Baum, Hedlund, Aristei and Goldman, which has represented 41 Taiwanese haemophiliacs and their relatives since 2003. At the centre of the dispute is a blood product called Koate, used in the early 1980s to make the blood of the haemophilia patients clot in the event of injury.

Koate was made by the US-headquartered

Cutter, which was bought by Bayer in the 1970s.

Taiwanese health authorities banned the product in 1985 after it was found that the product had not been heat-treated and could be tainted with HIV.

But by that time, thousands of people had been affected worldwide, among them at least 53 patients in Taiwan, according to Taiwan's Department of Health. Altogether 36 out of the original 53 local patients have died, a patient said.

Meanwhile, data from an AIDS vaccine trial in Thailand was presented to scientists yesterday for the first time, confirming the prototype as only a partial shield against HIV but still a pioneering achievement.

Volunteers who received the vaccine had a 31.2% reduction in the risk of infection by the human immunodeficiency virus, Thai and US researchers told the AIDS Vaccine 2009 conference in Paris.

It marks the first piece of solid good news in the quest for a vaccine against AIDS, which has claimed more than 25 million lives since 1981. – AFP