

Prostate patients warned of possible virus

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Some 2,000 patients of a Milwaukee veterans' hospital are being warned they may have been exposed to viruses, including HIV.

The patients all under went prostate biopsies in the period 1989-2003 at the Zablocki Veterans Affairs Medical Center. While officials described the risk of infection as "very small," it was suggested that such patients be examined, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported Friday.

The U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs has informed the patients and said there is "no evidence that any patient who had a prostate biopsy has acquired an infection."

The Journal Sentinel said 304 men had blood tests in response to the VA's letter and none has turned up positive for hepatitis C, hepatitis B or HIV, the three viruses being screened.

The VA said the concern arose when it was determined a device used during the biopsy procedure did not include clear instructions on cleaning.

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