



ELIZABETH GLASER PEDIATRIC AIDS FOUNDATION

# The Global HIV/AIDS Pandemic

## Global HIV/AIDS Statistics

- In more than 25 years, HIV has spread relentlessly from a few widely scattered “hot spots” to virtually every country in the world, infecting 65 million people and killing 25 million.
- The HIV/AIDS pandemic causes over 11,000 new infections and approximately 8,000 deaths daily.
- An estimated 39.5 million people worldwide were living with HIV in 2006:
  - Adults: 37.2 million
  - Women: 17.7 million
  - Children under 15 years: 2.3 million
- An estimated 4.3 million people became newly infected with HIV in 2006:
  - Adults: 3.8 million
  - Children under 15 years: 530,000
- In 2006, 2.9 million people died of AIDS-related illnesses:
  - Adults: 2.6 million
  - Children under 15 years: 380,000
- Changes in incidence (the rate at which new cases of a disease occur, reported in a specified population over a period of time), along with rising AIDS mortality, have caused global HIV prevalence (the proportion of people living with HIV) to level off. However, the number of people living with HIV has continued to rise due to population growth and, more recently, the life-prolonging effects of antiretroviral therapy.
- New infections are concentrated among young people aged 15 to 24 years. Forty percent of new infections were among young people in 2006.
- More than 90 percent of new HIV infections among children under age 15 result from mother-to-child transmission during pregnancy or breastfeeding.
- Globally, one in five people who need antiretroviral drugs are currently receiving them.

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- The overall impact of AIDS on the global population has not yet reached its peak, and its effects will likely be felt well into the second half of the 21st century. Current projections suggest that by 2015, in the 60 countries most affected by AIDS, the total population will be 115 million less than it would be in the absence of AIDS.
- Globally, two-thirds (63 percent) of all adults and children with HIV live in sub-Saharan Africa. One third (32 percent) of all people with HIV globally live in southern Africa, and 34 percent of all deaths due to AIDS in 2006 occurred in southern Africa.
- In the past two years, the number of people living with HIV increased in every region in the world. The most striking increases have occurred in East Asia and in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.
- The Caribbean region has the highest prevalence of HIV in the Western Hemisphere. A total of 330,000 people are living with HIV in the Caribbean. About 22,000 children in the Caribbean are infected, and women comprise 51 percent of adults in the Caribbean living with HIV. An estimated 37,000 people became infected with HIV in the Caribbean in 2005.
- In Latin America, some 140,000 people were newly infected with HIV in 2005, and a total of 1.6 million Latin Americans are living with the virus. There are about 32,000 children in Latin America living with HIV. In 2005, AIDS claimed some 59,000 lives in this region.

### Children and HIV/AIDS

- Despite progress in preventing HIV transmission from pregnant mothers to their babies, approximately 1,500 children under the age of 15 worldwide were infected with the virus each day in 2006. The range of children infected each year is 410,000 to 660,000.
- Without antiretroviral treatment (ART), about one-third of HIV-infected infants will die within their first year, and half will die before their second birthday.
- Lack of HIV prevention and treatment has left an estimated 15.2 million children as orphans. The number is expected to grow to 20 million by 2010.
- Only one in ten children needing ART receive it. The remaining 90 percent face a bleak and short-lived future.
- The vast majority of deaths in children with HIV are preventable, either through treating opportunistic infections – potentially deadly infections common in people with HIV – with antibiotics, or through ART. But at most, 1 in 25 children born to HIV-infected mothers receives antibiotics to prevent opportunistic infections, which can be fatal.

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- More than 85 percent of children infected with HIV live in sub-Saharan Africa, although incidence of mother-to-child transmission of HIV is rising rapidly in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.
- Currently, children under 15 years of age account for one in six AIDS-related deaths worldwide and one in seven new HIV infections – the vast majority through mother-to-child transmission of the virus.
- Globally, only half of countries have a policy to address the needs of children orphaned or made vulnerable by the AIDS epidemic.

### Women and HIV/AIDS

- Globally, and in every region, more adult women (15 years or older) than ever before are living with HIV. More than 17.7 million women were living with HIV in 2006, an increase of over one million compared with 2004.
- Women represent nearly half of all people living with HIV – more than 17.7 million out of a total of 39.5 million. The number of HIV-positive women worldwide continues to grow.
- One in ten young pregnant women living in the capital cities of sub-Saharan Africa is HIV-infected, and about one in three children born to HIV-infected pregnant women will contract the virus.
- In sub-Saharan Africa, for every ten adult men living with HIV, there are approximately 14 adult women infected with the virus. In 2006, 59 percent of people living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa were women.
- Globally, just under 8 percent of all pregnant women have access to services to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV. In sub-Saharan Africa in 2005, fewer than 6 percent of pregnant women had access to services to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV.
- Only ten percent of pregnant women with HIV in low- and middle-income countries received treatment to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV in 2005. Though low, this number represents an increase from 3 percent in 2003.

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### HIV/AIDS Prevention

- It has been estimated that as many as two-thirds of the new HIV infections expected to occur in this decade could be averted by the implementation of a comprehensive range of evidence-based prevention measures, such as the use of nevirapine for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV (UNAIDS, 2005).
- In 2004, public, philanthropic, and commercial sectors invested an estimated \$682 million in HIV vaccine research and development. However, it is likely to be a decade or more before a preventive HIV vaccine is available for use. Due to a host of logistical and scientific challenges, progress to date has been slow in vaccine research and development.
- Scaling up available prevention strategies in 125 low- and middle-income countries would avert an estimated 28 million new HIV infections between 2005 and 2015 – more than half the infections projected to occur during this period – and save \$24 billion in associated treatment costs (Stover et al., 2006).
- It is estimated that a response focusing solely on treatment would result in only 9 million averted new HIV infections. In contrast, simultaneous scaling up of both prevention and treatment would avert 29 million new HIV infections by the end of 2020 (Salomon et al., 2005).
- Worldwide, only 12 percent of those who want to be tested for HIV are currently able to be (UNAIDS et al., 2005c).

### HIV/AIDS Care and Treatment

- Access to care and treatment has increased greatly in recent years. Through the expanded provision of antiretroviral treatment, an estimated 2 million life years have been gained in low- and middle-income countries since 2002.
- More than 1.3 million people in low- and middle-income countries were receiving antiretroviral therapy by December 2005, up from approximately 400,000 people two years earlier.
- In sub-Saharan Africa, the number of people receiving treatment increased more than eight-fold (from 100,000 to 810,000) between 2003 and 2005, and more than doubled in 2005 alone. About one-sixth (17 percent) of the 4.7 million people in need of antiretroviral therapy in sub-Saharan Africa now receive it.
- The number of people receiving antiretroviral therapy in Asia increased almost three-fold in two years, from 70,000 in 2003 to 180,000 in 2005. About one in six people in need of antiretroviral treatment in Asia are now receiving it.

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- Antiretroviral therapy coverage remains inadequate in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, with only 21,000 of the estimated 160,000 people in need of antiretroviral treatment receiving it at the end of 2005.
- In the Caribbean, 23 percent of people in need of antiretroviral therapy were receiving it in 2005.
- In 2003, only three of the 49 countries most heavily affected by HIV/AIDS had national treatment plans. By December 2005, 46 countries had national plans in place for antiretroviral treatment.
- UNICEF reports that seven countries – Botswana, Cape Verde, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Namibia, Rwanda, and Thailand – have provided antiretroviral treatment to at least 20 percent of HIV-positive children in need of the drugs.
- Worldwide, it is estimated that between 250,000 and 350,000 deaths were averted in 2005 as a result of increased treatment access (WHO/UNAIDS, 2005).
- Despite many achievements, as of December 2005 at least 80 percent of those in need of antiretroviral drugs were not receiving them.

\*Unless otherwise noted, all numbers are from the 2006 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic – A UNAIDS 10th Anniversary Special Edition, the UNAIDS December 2006 AIDS Epidemic Update, and UNICEF's Children and AIDS: A Stocktaking Report (January 2007).

*This fact sheet was updated on February 7, 2007. For additional information or with questions, please contact Chris Hudnall at 310-314-1459 or [chris@pedaids.org](mailto:chris@pedaids.org).*

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