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The HIV/AIDS Epidemic in the United States

General U.S. Statistics

- Approximately 40,000 people become infected with HIV each year in the U.S.. **Glynn M., Rhodes P. Estimated HIV prevalence in the United States at the end of 2003. National HIV Prevention Conference; June 2005; Atlanta. Abstract 595.**
- In 2005, more people than ever were living with HIV in the U.S.: 1.2 million. Nationally, HIV prevalence among adults was estimated at .6 percent. This increase reflects mixed results in the U.S.' efforts to combat the epidemic. On one hand, more people with HIV are living longer due to antiretroviral treatment, which averted or delayed deaths for between 33,000 and 42,000 people between 1995 and 2002 (Holtgrave, 2006). On the other hand, the early gains made on the prevention front have not been sustained. **2006 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic – A UNAIDS 10th Anniversary Special Edition.**
- In 2005, approximately 35,537 new diagnoses of HIV infection (not AIDS) were reported in the 38 U.S. states and areas with confidential, name-based reporting. Of these cases, 73 percent were males, 27 percent were females, and less than 1 percent were children under 13 years of age. [Note: Reporting states do not include California, Illinois, or Maryland, which are among the states with the largest numbers of reported AIDS cases.] **CDC, HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report 2005, Volume 17.**
- Since the first reports of AIDS in the U.S. in 1981, it is estimated that at least 1.6 million people in the U.S. have been infected with HIV. **CDC, HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report, Volume 16, 2005.**
- An estimated one-fourth of people living with HIV in the U.S. do not know that they have been infected with the virus (Glynn and Rhodes, 2005). Persons unaware of their infection are unlikely to access appropriate treatment and care services until relatively late in the progression of AIDS disease, which limits the effectiveness of treatment. **UNAIDS, December 2006 AIDS Epidemic Update.**
- Individuals who are unaware of their HIV-positive status potentially may account for 54 to 70 percent of all new sexually transmitted HIV infections in the U.S. **UNAIDS, December 2006 AIDS Epidemic Update.**
- Provision of antiretroviral therapy has resulted in an 80-percent decline in AIDS death rates between 1990 and 2003. **Crum et al., in UNAIDS, December 2006 AIDS Epidemic Update.**

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- HIV treatment in the U.S. has become increasingly effective, with the proportion of people surviving for two years or longer after AIDS diagnosis growing from 64 percent between 1993 and 1995 to 85 percent between 1996 and 2005. ***U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2006a.***
- At least 3 million years of life have been saved as a direct result of effective treatment and care of AIDS patients in the U.S. ***Walensky et al, 2006, in UNAIDS, December 2006 AIDS Epidemic Update.***

HIV/AIDS and Children: U.S. Statistics

- In 2005, 430 cases of HIV infection (not AIDS) in children were newly reported. ***CDC, HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report 2005, Volume 17.***
- In 2005, 93 AIDS cases in children were newly reported. ***CDC, HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report 2005, Volume 17.***
- From 2000 to 2004, the estimated number of AIDS cases in the U.S. decreased 61 percent among children under 13 years of age. ***CDC, HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report 2004, Volume 16.***
- Of the estimated 6,792 children living with HIV/AIDS in the U.S. today, 90 percent were exposed perinatally (before birth). [Note: Reporting is from the 35 areas with name-based HIV infection reporting.] ***CDC, HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report, Volume 17, 2005.***

HIV/AIDS and Gender, Race, and Ethnicity: U.S. Statistics

- From 2000 through 2004, the estimated number of AIDS cases in the U.S. increased 10 percent among women and 7 percent among men. ***CDC, HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report 2004, Volume 16.***
- Unprotected sex is not the only way that women in the U.S. are being infected with HIV. About one-fourth of American women newly diagnosed with HIV in 2003 were infected while injecting drugs, while only about one-fifth of new HIV infections overall in the U.S. are attributable to injection drug use (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2004a). For many of the women who acquire HIV during sex, the main risk factor appears to be risky behavior in their male partners – including injection drug use, commercial sex, or sex with other men (McMahon et al. 2004; Valleroy et al., 2004; Montgomery et al., 2003). ***2006 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic – A UNAIDS 10th Anniversary Special Edition.***
- The proportion of women among newly infected HIV cases or AIDS diagnoses in the U.S. has increased dramatically – from 15 percent before 1995 to 27 percent in 2004. ***UNAIDS, December 2006 AIDS Epidemic Update.***

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- Racial and ethnic minorities continue to be disproportionately affected by the HIV epidemic. Between 2001 and 2004, 50 percent of AIDS diagnoses were among African-Americans (who constitute only 12 percent of the U.S. population) and 20 percent among Hispanics (14 percent of the U.S. population). **UNAIDS, December 2006 AIDS Epidemic Update.**
- The rate of new HIV or AIDS diagnoses was seven times higher among African-American men than among white men in 2004 (131.6 per 100,000 persons compared with 18.7 per 100,000 persons) and 21 times higher among African-American women than among white women (67 per 100,000 persons compared with 3.2 per 100,000 persons). **U.S. Centers for Disease Control, 2006a.**
- One recent study has suggested that the high rates of incarceration of African-American men (approximately one in 12 of whom have been in jail or prison) could be associated with the disproportionate HIV infection rates among African-American men and women. **Johnson and Raphael, 2006, in UNAIDS, December 2006 AIDS Epidemic Update.**
- Based on data from the 35 U.S. states and areas with long-term, confidential, name-based HIV reporting, the most common risk factor for HIV infection remains unsafe sex between men (accounting for about 44 percent of HIV or AIDS cases reported from 2001 to 2004), followed by unprotected heterosexual intercourse (34 percent of cases) and the use of non-sterile drug injecting equipment (17 percent of cases). **U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2006a.**
- African-American women are up to 12 times more likely to be infected with HIV than their white counterparts. AIDS is the leading cause of death among African-American women aged 25 to 34 years, and ranks in the top three causes of death for African-American men aged 25 to 54 years (U.S. Centers for Disease and Control and Prevention, 2004b). **2006 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic – A UNAIDS 10th Anniversary Special Edition.**

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.

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