

INTERNATIONAL AIDS FACT SHEET

On May 11, 1999, the World Health Organization announced that HIV/AIDS is now the world's deadliest infectious disease. The United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) estimates that there are approximately 36 million men, women, and children living with HIV/AIDS. Since the beginning of the epidemic, AIDS has resulted in the deaths of 22 million people and has become the fourth leading cause of death worldwide. In 2000, almost 5 and a half million were infected with HIV internationally. Half of the people who acquire HIV are infected before they turn 25 and will typically die of AIDS before their 35th birthday. On April 30, 2000, the Clinton administration formally declared HIV a threat to national security. The administration stated that the AIDS epidemic could "topple foreign governments, touch off ethnic wars and undo decades of work in building free-market democracies abroad."

The AIDS pandemic has affected diverse populations in different parts of the world. Sub-Saharan Africa has been hit hardest, with almost 4 million new infections each year. In many areas in the world, HIV is prevalent in sub-populations, such as sex workers, injection drug users, and men who have sex with men. By the end of the year 2000, the global AIDS pandemic will have orphaned at least 13 million children. HIV also threatens the economic stability and national security of many developing countries.

Regional AIDS Statistics as of December 2000:

Region	Estimated living with HIV/AIDS
Sub-Saharan Africa	25,300,000
South & Southeast Asia	5,800,000
Latin America	1,400,000
North America	920,000
East Asia	640,000
Western Europe	540,000
Caribbean	390,000
Eastern Europe & Central Asia	700,000
Northern Africa/Middle East	400,000
Australia & New Zealand	15,000

Regional Profiles

- **Sub-Saharan Africa** has been profoundly impacted by the AIDS pandemic. While this region represents only 11% of the total global population, it is home to approximately 75% of the world's HIV infections and over 25 million people living with HIV/AIDS. Women are at higher risk for infection, comprising 55% of the HIV-infected population. In South Africa, where 1,600 new HIV infections occur every day, 20% of the working population may be infected with HIV by 2005. By the year 2010, HIV/AIDS will have nearly cut life expectancy in half in certain countries in southern Africa.
- **South and Southeast Asia** were largely spared during the pandemic's first decade but now account for 20% of the world's HIV infections. At present, there are almost 6 million people in Asia living with HIV/AIDS. The AIDS pandemic is rampant in India, where 3.7 million people are HIV-infected. In Southeast Asia, 95% of all HIV/AIDS cases are concentrated in India, Thailand and Myanmar. Within a few years, it is possible that Asia will be home to more people living with HIV than any other region in the world.
- In **Latin America**, there are now almost one and a half million people living with HIV/AIDS. Approximately 150,000 new infections occurred in 2000. Over the past few years, Latin America has seen a dramatic increase in infections, particularly in women and children. AIDS has lowered life expectancy by 10% in Brazil and increased crude death rates by 50%. By 2010, one in seven adults living in the South American country of Guyana will be HIV+.

- **The United States and Canada** are home to almost 1 million men, women and children living with HIV/AIDS. Each year, approximately 45,000 new infections occur in this region. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has estimated that 300,000 people in the United States are living with HIV and do not know their status. While Caucasians have recorded the most deaths of any group since reporting began, the epidemic disproportionately affects communities of color. Through June 2000, 430,441 people had died of AIDS in the United States.
- **East Asia and the Pacific** contain approximately 640,000 people living with HIV/AIDS. While adult prevalence is relatively low, AIDS is expected to spread rapidly with an estimated 500,000 new infections during the next year. China has an estimated 400,000 people with HIV, although only 11,000 cases are confirmed. Within the next year, the number of cases could grow to as many as 1 million people. Japanese health officials are becoming increasingly alarmed by the decline in HIV testing at public health centers coupled with the significant increase of HIV-positive test results, which have more than doubled between 1992 and 1998.
- **Western Europe** has approximately 520,000 people living with HIV/AIDS. In Western Europe, as well as other industrialized areas, there is concern that the availability of antiretroviral therapies have led to complacency about the dangers of HIV. Western European nations still account for almost 90% of reported AIDS cases in all of Europe. Although the use of antiretroviral treatment has decreased morbidity and mortality, an estimated 30,000 Western European adults and children were newly infected with HIV in 2000. New HIV infections are concentrated among injection drug users in the southern countries, particularly Greece and Portugal.
- **The Caribbean** is home to 390,000 people living with HIV/AIDS. The infection rate in the Caribbean ranges from 1 in 50 to 1 in 200, resulting in the highest per-capita infection rates in the world. Each year, 57,000 people become infected with HIV in the Caribbean. Approximately 15% of all infants born in the Caribbean are HIV+. While the actual number of people living with HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean is relatively small compared to other regions, the percentage of people living with HIV/AIDS is alarmingly high.
- In **Eastern Europe and Central Asia**, there are approximately 700,000 people living with HIV/AIDS, an alarming increase from the 420,000 estimated cases in 1999. According to UNAIDS, HIV is rapidly spreading in Eastern Europe. Injection drug use is driving the epidemic in this region, with subsequent spread of the virus through sexual networks. HIV infections rates in Russia are steadily growing, and the collapse of basic public health systems in Russia make the containment of the HIV virus even more difficult. During the year 2000, the Russian Federation will register more new HIV infections than in all previous years combined. By 2002, approximately 2 million Russians are expected to be living with HIV/AIDS.
- **North Africa and the Middle East** have a relatively low number of infections, with approximately 400,000 people living with HIV/AIDS. This area is of particular concern because 10 million people are infected with sexually transmitted diseases each year.
- **Australia and New Zealand** have a relatively low prevalence rate, with approximately 15,000 people living with HIV/AIDS. Each year 500 people are newly infected with HIV in these regions.

In the 21st century, one in four adults in some countries will have contracted HIV. Effective prevention programs and care initiatives require funding, yet the countries hit hardest by AIDS are among the poorest in the world. Just as we have made a commitment to combat oppression in Europe and internationally, we need to make a commitment to fight a virus that threatens the international community.

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