



MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Despite recent improvements in some countries, epidemiological surveillance in this region remains limited (Obermeyer, 2006). Nevertheless, using available HIV information it is estimated that 35 000 [16 000–65 000] people acquired HIV in 2007, bringing to 380 000 [270 000–500 000] the total number of people living with HIV in the region. As a result of AIDS-related illnesses, an estimated 25 000 [20 000–34 000] people died in 2007.

Reported numbers of HIV cases in the region remain small. Most HIV infections are occurring in men and in urban areas, with the exception of the **Sudan**, the country with the highest prevalence in the region, where unsafe heterosexual intercourse is the most important risk factor for HIV infection.

While unprotected paid sex is a key factor in the HIV epidemics throughout the region, exposure to contaminated drug injecting equipment is the main route of HIV transmission in **Afghanistan**, the **Islamic Republic of Iran**, the **Libyan Arab Jamahiriya** and **Tunisia**, and contributes to the epidemics of **Algeria**, **Morocco** and the **Syrian Arab Republic**.