

Sub-Saharan Africa

Overview

- Sub-Saharan Africa remains the worst-affected region in the world. At the end of 2005, there were 24.5 million in sub-Saharan Africa living with HIV. Globally, 64% of all people living with HIV live in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Globally, there were an estimated 17.3 million women living with HIV in 2005 – three quarters (or 13.2 million) were living in sub-Saharan Africa. Around 59% of all adults living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa are women.
- In 2005, the region was home to 2 million children under 15 years of age living with HIV. Almost 90% of the total number of children living with HIV live in sub-Saharan Africa and fewer than one in ten of those children are being reached by basic support services.
- An estimated 12 million children under the age of 17 (just under 10% of children) living in sub-Saharan Africa have lost one or both parents to AIDS.
- In 2005, an estimated 2.7 million people in the region became newly infected with HIV and 2 million adults and children died of AIDS.
- Around 72% (or 4.7 million) of all people in need of antiretroviral therapy live in sub-Saharan Africa. In 2005 around one in six people in need of treatment in the region were receiving it (i.e. 17% or 810,000 people).
- Across the region new rates of HIV infections peaked in the late 1990's and some countries have shown recent declines, notably **Kenya**, **Zimbabwe** and urban areas of **Burkina Faso**. HIV prevalence appears to be levelling off (i.e. the number of new infections is roughly matching the number of people who are dying of AIDS) but at very high levels in southern Africa.

Country developments

- In 2005, one-third of AIDS deaths globally occurred in **southern Africa** where an estimated 930,000 adults and children died of AIDS-related illnesses. Almost one-third of people living with HIV globally live in southern Africa, as do about 43% of all children under 15 years living with HIV and 52% of all women over 15 years living with the virus.
- In **southern Africa**, HIV prevalence levels are exceptionally high (except for **Angola** – 3.7%). However, in **Zimbabwe**, where 1.7 million people are living with HIV, data have shown a decline in HIV prevalence which is currently estimated at 20.1%, down from 22.1% in 2003. This decline is twofold; studies have shown both a substantial increase in condom use since the early 1990's and that more young people have been delaying their sexual debut and reducing the number of casual sexual partners; however, a significant factor in the decline is attributed to high-mortality rates.
- There are no signs of a decline in other parts of southern Africa, at the end of 2005. **Botswana's** national HIV prevalence stood at 24.1%, **Namibia's** was at 19.6% and **Swaziland's** at 33.4%. In **Swaziland**, HIV prevalence among pregnant women attending antenatal clinics rose from 4% in 1992 to 43% in 2004.

- **South Africa's** epidemic is one of the worst in the world with an estimated 5.5 million people (18.8% of adults) living with HIV in 2005. Almost one in three pregnant women attending public antenatal clinics were living with HIV in 2004 and trends show a gradual increase in HIV prevalence. There has been significant scale-up on the treatment front – around 190,000 people were receiving therapy by the end of 2005 – however this still only represents less than 20% of those in need.
- In **Mozambique**, national adult HIV prevalence is estimated at 16.1% and 1.8 million people were living with HIV in 2005. The virus is spreading fastest in provinces linked by major transport routes to Malawi, South Africa and Zimbabwe.
- In **East Africa** HIV prevalence has either decreased or remained stable in past years. In **Kenya**, 1.3 million people were living with HIV in 2005. However, surveys have shown that condom use has been rising, women have been delaying their sexual debut and people have been reducing the number of sexual partners. As a result, national HIV prevalence fell from 10% in the late 1990's to around 6% in 2005 (increased mortality and saturation of infection among people most at risk are also factors in the decline).
- **Uganda** saw a steep decline in HIV prevalence during the mid- and late-1990's. The epidemic appears now to have stabilised, with some groups continuing to see declines, notably among pregnant women in the capital Kampala. In 2005, national HIV prevalence was at 6.7% and around 1 million people were living with the virus.
- In the **United Republic of Tanzania**, 1.4 million people were living with HIV in 2005 (6.5% of adults). The epidemic appears to be relatively stable, however, prevalence has increased markedly in older age groups reaching 13% among women aged 30-34 years.
- In **Somalia**, although national HIV prevalence is low (0.9% of adults), knowledge of HIV transmission is poor and condom use uncommon – one study showed that 17 out of 20 men and 19 out of 20 women aged 15-24 years had never used a condom.
- At 7.1% **Côte d'Ivoire** has the highest national HIV prevalence in **West Africa**. Available data show that the epidemic appears to have stayed relatively stable for almost a decade and significant declines in HIV prevalence are being seen in pregnant women, notably in Abidjan (note: civil conflict in the country has been preventing the gathering of new data).
- In **Burkina Faso** HIV prevalence among pregnant women (15-24 years) attending antenatal clinics in urban areas dropped from almost 4% in 2001 to just under 2% in 2003. This could reflect the effects of increasing HIV prevention efforts over the past decade; sex with non-regular partners has decreased and condom use has increased, especially among young people. National adult HIV prevalence was at 2% in 2005.
- **Nigeria** has the third-largest number of people living with HIV in the world – 2.9 million. Infection levels vary radically across this large country – from 1.3% in the south west to 4.9% in northern and central areas.
- **Senegal's** epidemic pivots mainly on the sex trade and there is a danger of HIV spreading more widely to the general population. HIV prevalence among female sex workers has remained high at around 20% in Dakar and 30% in Ziguinchor.
- Sex work is also a driving factor in **Ghana's** epidemic, where adult HIV prevalence is estimated at 2.3%. Infection levels have been rising among antenatal attendees and reached just under 4% in 2005.
- In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** an estimated 1 million people were living with HIV in 2005. Adult HIV prevalence was estimated at 3.2%, but, HIV prevalence as high as 7% was found in pregnant women in Lubumbashi.

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