

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 10:30 GMT, 21 NOVEMBER 2005**

## **SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

*Sub-Saharan Africa has just over 10% of the world's population, but is home to more than 60% of all people living with HIV—25.8 million. In 2005, an estimated 3.2 million people in the region became newly infected, while 2.4 million adults and children died of AIDS.*

- Declines in adult national HIV prevalence appear to be underway in **Kenya, Uganda** and **Zimbabwe**. Each of those countries, however, remains saddled with a large, potentially ruinous epidemic.
- HIV prevalence remains exceptionally high in southern Africa and the epidemic is continuing to expand, notably in **Mozambique** and **Swaziland**.
- West and Central Africa show no signs of changing HIV infection levels, except for urban parts of **Burkina Faso** where prevalence appears to be declining.
- In **Zimbabwe** recent data from the national surveillance system show a decline in HIV prevalence among pregnant women from 26% in 2002 to 21% in 2004. Changes in sexual behaviour appear to have contributed to the decline. Condom use within casual partnerships has reached high levels (86% among the men, and 83% among the women) and recent data indicates that there could have been a reduction in the reported number of sexual partners in recent years.
- However, with over one in five pregnant women still testing HIV-positive in **Zimbabwe**, infection levels remain among the highest in the world.
- In **South Africa** the epidemic has evolved at an astonishing speed. National adult HIV prevalence of less than 1% in 1990 soared to almost 25% within 10 years. New data from **South Africa** show that HIV prevalence among pregnant women has reached its highest levels to date: 29.5% of women attending antenatal clinics tested HIV-positive in 2004.
- AIDS in **South Africa** is taking a devastating toll on human lives. A recent study of death registration data has shown that deaths among people 15 years of age and older increased by 62% from 1997-2002.
- Very high HIV prevalence—often exceeding 30% among pregnant women—is still being recorded in **Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia** and **Swaziland** and there is no clear evidence of a decline in HIV prevalence.
- In **Swaziland** HIV prevalence among pregnant women soared to 43% in 2004, up from 34% four years earlier. In 1992, prevalence had stood at 4%.
- In **Malawi** the epidemic is diverse and has not yet exhausted its potential for growth. Prevalence among pregnant women ranged from just under 7% at a site in the central region to 33% at the southern tip of the country. Prevalence in rural communities is particularly high (up from 12.1% in 1999 to 14.5% in 2003) as is prevalence among pregnant women (20% among 20-24 year-olds).
- Infection levels have been rising in all regions in **Mozambique**, national adult HIV prevalence rose from 14% in 2002 to 16% in 2004. HIV is spreading fastest in

provinces that contain the country's main transport links with Malawi, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

- In **Zambia**, national mean HIV prevalence among adult pregnant women has hovered at 18-20% since 1994 with rising prevalence trends seen among 15-19 year-old antenatal clinic attendees. Urban residents are twice as likely to be HIV-infected, compared with those in rural areas, with the highest infection levels clustered in cities and towns that straddle major transport routes.
- **Botswana's** epidemic appears to be stabilizing—but at extraordinarily high levels, with national HIV prevalence among pregnant women having stayed between 35% and 37% since 2001. Infection levels among older men and women were unexpectedly high: 29% for those 45-49 years-old, and 21% for those in their early 50s. Also surprising are the gaps in HIV knowledge. One in four respondents did not know that consistent condom use prevents transmission, and only 13% knew three ways for preventing sexual transmission of the virus.
- New research and analysis is enabling a clearer understanding of **Uganda's** epidemic, where national HIV prevalence peaked at over 15% in the early 1990s before steadily diminishing, partly as a result of a nationwide effort to curb the epidemic. However, these declining prevalence trends may not continue in the future if prevention efforts are not stepped-up. According to a recent survey 29% of men taking part in the survey said they had more than one sexual partner in the last 12 months and condom use was not at all widespread.
- The epidemic in **Kenya** peaked in the late 1990s with an overall HIV prevalence of 10% in adults, which declined to 7% in 2003. This is only the second time in more than 20 years that a sustained decline in national HIV infection levels has been seen in a sub-Saharan African country. Condom use with casual partners has increased, most strikingly among women: in 2003 almost 24% said they used a condom the last time they had casual sex, compared with 15% in 1998. The prevalence drop is also due to delayed sexual debut, a reduction in the number of sexual partners and increased mortality.
- In **Ethiopia** around 1.5 million people were living with HIV in 2004. The epidemic is concentrated mainly in urban areas, but the burden is shifting to rural areas where more people are becoming newly infected with HIV than in urban areas. In a country where AIDS caused an estimated 30% of all adult deaths in 2003, fewer than 10% of people in need of antiretroviral therapy were receiving it by mid-2005.
- **Nigeria** is home to more people living with HIV than any other country in the world, save for South Africa and India—between 3.2 and 3.6 million people at the end of 2003.
- In sub-Saharan Africa at least one third of people in need of antiretroviral therapy are receiving it in countries such as **Botswana** and **Uganda**, while in **Cameroon**, **Côte d'Ivoire**, **Kenya**, **Malawi** and **Zambia** between 10% and 20% of people requiring antiretroviral drugs were receiving them in mid-2005.
- At least 85% of **South Africans** (almost 900,000 people) who needed antiretroviral drugs were not yet receiving them by mid-2005; the same applied to 90% or more of those in need in countries such as **Ethiopia**, **Ghana**, **Lesotho**, **Mozambique**, **Nigeria**, the **United Republic of Tanzania** and **Zimbabwe**.

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