



HIV/AIDS Today

Vol. 1, Issue 7: February 29, 2008

Sub-Saharan Africa

More than two thirds of all people with HIV live in sub-Saharan Africa. This week's factsheet details the scope and impact of the epidemic in the region.ⁱ

INFECTION RATES

The sub-Saharan region of Africa includes 42 mainland and 6 island countries. While more than one-tenth of the world's population lives in sub-Saharan Africa, approximately 68% of the world's adults infected with HIV and nearly 90% of all children infected with HIV live in this region. In 2007, there were an estimated 1.7 million new HIV infections in this region. A total of 22.5 million people are living with HIV/AIDS in the region, including the estimated 1.7 million who were newly infected in 2007.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

The HIV/AIDS epidemic is most active and deadly in the southern region of Africa, which includes South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, Angola, and Zimbabwe. These countries account for approximately one-third of all people living with HIV; one-third of all new HIV infections in 2007; and one-third of all AIDS related deaths in 2007.

The country of South Africa has the largest number of HIV infections in the world with approximately 5.5 million people currently living with HIV infection. However, recent prevalence data suggests that HIV infection rates might be leveling off in South Africa.

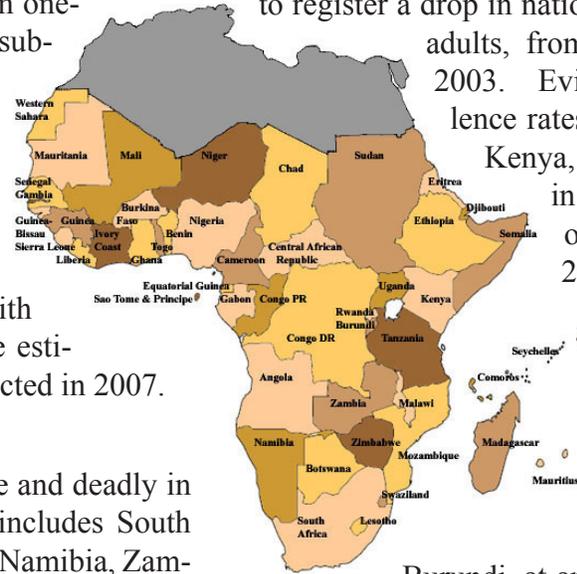
EAST AFRICA

Prevalence rates have either stabilized or started to decline in most of the countries in East Africa. While behavioral changes appear to have led to lower rates of new infections, the death of people with AIDS has also contributed to the decreasing prevalence rates.

ENDNOTES

ⁱ All information in this factsheet is from the World Health Organization and Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), 2007 *AIDS Epidemic Update* (Dec. 2007) (online at http://data.unaids.org/pub/EPISlides/2007/2007_epiupdate_en.pdf); Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), *Countries* (online at <http://www.unaids.org/en/CountryResponses/Countries/default.asp>).

Uganda was the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to register a drop in national HIV prevalence among adults, from 5% in 2001 to 4.1% in 2003. Evidence of declining prevalence rates has also been observed in Kenya, from 15% in 2001 to 6.1% in 2005, the United Republic of Tanzania, from 9% in 2003 to 6.5% in 2005, and in urban Ethiopia from 4.4% in 2003 to a range of 0.9% to 3.5% in 2005 for the country as a whole. While not declining, the prevalence rates have stabilized in rural Ethiopia, Burundi, at approximately 3.3% in 2005, and Rwanda, at 3.1% in 2005. Unfortunately, due to conflict within Somalia, updated surveillance data is not available.



WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

The countries of West and Central Africa have experienced smaller HIV epidemics than their neighbors. The largest epidemic in this sub-region is in Nigeria, where the prevalence rate ranges from 1.6% to 10% throughout the country. While national HIV prevalence rates have remained stable overall in West and Central Africa, there are signs of declining HIV prevalence in several countries including Burkina Faso, where HIV prevalence among young pregnant women declined by half to slightly below 2% from 2001 to 2003, and Mali, where HIV prevalence among adults fell from 1.7% in 2001 to 1.2% in 2006.