

HIV among African Americans

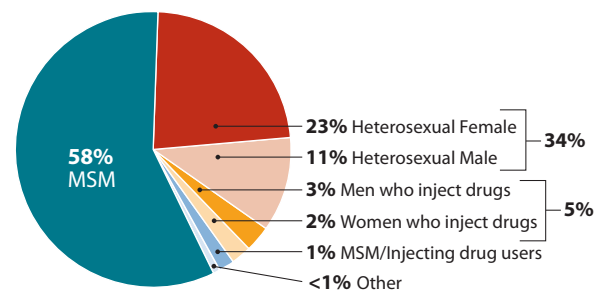
HIV is a crisis that threatens the health and well-being of African American men and women across the United States. While African Americans continue to face the most severe burden of HIV and AIDS of any racial/ethnic group in the nation, prevention efforts have helped lead to encouraging decreases in new diagnoses in recent years, driven by steep declines in new diagnoses among African American women in particular (25 percent decline from 2010 to 2014). After years of troubling increases, diagnoses also stabilized among African American gay and bisexual men between 2010 and 2014.

Still, young black gay and bisexual men account for more new diagnoses than any other group, and HIV continues to affect African American heterosexual women more than women of any other race or ethnicity.

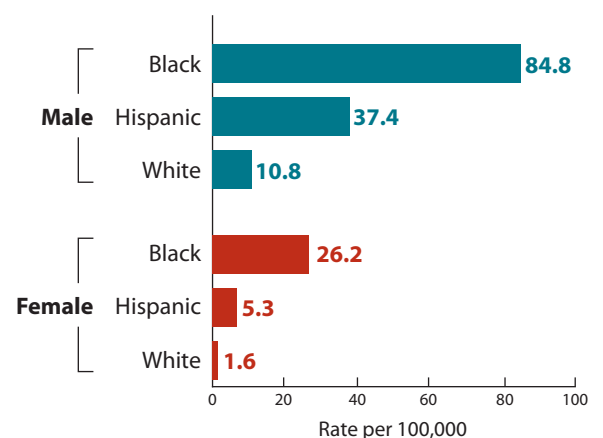
A Snapshot

- In 2015, approximately 17,670 African Americans received a diagnosis of HIV infection.¹
- Overall, CDC estimates that African Americans represent more than one-third (40 percent or 498,400 persons) of all people living with HIV and almost half (45 percent in 2015) of all persons with newly diagnosed infection.
- Black, gay and bisexual men are the most affected, followed by heterosexual women:
 - Black men accounted for almost one-third (33 percent) of all HIV diagnoses in 2015. The rate of HIV diagnoses for black men was nearly eight times as high as the rate among white men, and more than twice that of Hispanic men. Among black men, most new diagnoses occur among men who have sex with men (MSM).²
 - Black women accounted for 11 percent of all HIV diagnoses in 2015 and the majority (61 percent) of diagnoses among women overall. The HIV diagnosis rate for black women remains 16 times as high as that of white women, and almost five times that of Hispanic women.
- If current rates persist, CDC projects that approximately one in 20 black men, one in 48 black women, and one in two black gay and bisexual men will receive a diagnosis of HIV during their lifetimes.

HIV Diagnoses among Blacks, 2015, by Transmission Category



Rate of HIV Diagnoses, 2015, by Gender and Race/Ethnicity



¹ 2015 data are considered preliminary (subject to change) because they are based on only a 6-month reporting delay.

² The term men who have sex with men is used in CDC surveillance systems. It indicates the behaviors that transmit HIV infection, rather than how individuals self-identify in terms of their sexuality.



- Treatment helps people with HIV live healthy lives and prevents transmission of the virus to partners. However, too few African Americans living with HIV receive the care and treatment they need. CDC estimates that of the roughly 498,400 African Americans living with HIV in 2013, 87 percent were aware of their status. And a recent CDC study suggests that, among African Americans with diagnosed HIV, less than half (49 percent in 2013) have achieved viral suppression (that is, the virus is under control at a level that helps them stay healthy and reduces the risk of transmission).
- African Americans account for almost half of all those with AIDS who have died in the United States since the beginning of the epidemic. However, a recent study found that death rates among blacks with HIV declined 28 percent from 2008 to 2012.

Multiple, Complex Factors Increase Risk

- **High prevalence of HIV:** African Americans face a higher risk of being exposed to HIV infection with each sexual encounter than do other racial/ethnic groups. This is because the prevalence of HIV is greater in African American communities than in any other racial/ethnic group, and because African Americans are likely to have sexual relations with other African Americans. Therefore, even with levels of individual risk behaviors (e.g., sex without a condom, multiple partners) that are comparable to other races/ethnicities, African Americans face a higher risk of infection with each sexual encounter.
- **Higher prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs):** The prevalence of STDs is higher in African Americans than in any other racial/ethnic group. Because STDs can place individuals at higher risk for HIV infection, higher STD prevalence may contribute to higher HIV incidence among black men and women.
- **Stigma:** Fear of disclosing risk behavior or sexual orientation may prevent African Americans from seeking testing, prevention and treatment services, and support from friends and family.
- **Socioeconomic factors:** The social and economic realities that exist in some African American communities may lead to increased HIV risk. These include poverty, racial discrimination, less access to healthcare and higher rates of incarceration, which can disrupt social networks and decrease the number of available partners for women.

If you are a member of the news media and need more information, please visit www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/newsroom or contact the News Media Line at CDC's National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention 404-639-8895 or NCHHSTPMediaTeam@cdc.gov.