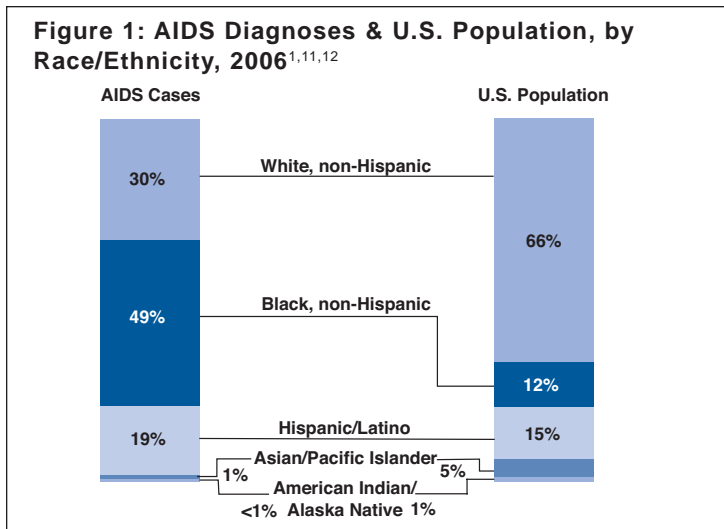


Black Americans and HIV/AIDS

October 2008

Black Americans have been disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS since the epidemic's beginning, and that disparity has deepened over time.^{1,2} Blacks account for more new HIV infections, AIDS cases, people estimated to be living with HIV disease, and HIV-related deaths than any other racial/ethnic group in the U.S.^{1,3,4,5,6} The epidemic has also had a disproportionate impact on Black women, youth, and men who have sex with men, and its impact varies across the country. Moreover, Blacks with HIV/AIDS may face greater barriers to accessing care than their white counterparts.^{7,8,9} Today, there are approximately 1.1 million people living with HIV/AIDS in the U.S., including more than 500,000 who are Black.⁵ Analysis of national household survey data found that 2% of Blacks in the U.S. were HIV positive, higher than any other group.¹⁰

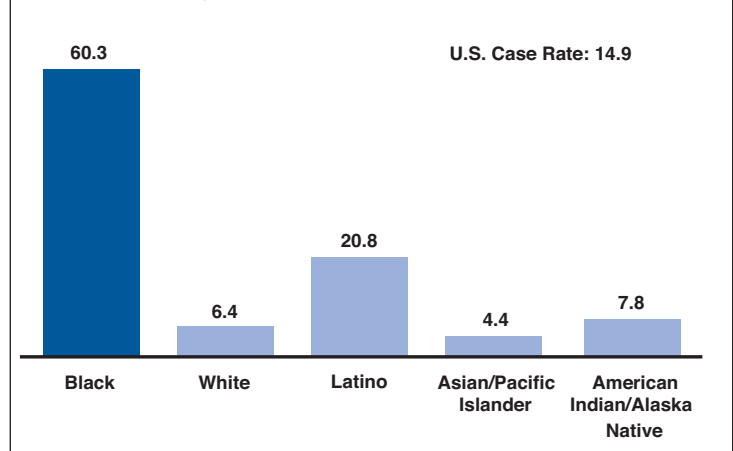
Figure 1: AIDS Diagnoses & U.S. Population, by Race/Ethnicity, 2006^{1,11,12}



Snapshot of the Epidemic

- Although Black Americans represent only 12% of the U.S. population,¹² they account for half of AIDS cases diagnosed in 2006 (Figure 1).^{1,11} Blacks also account for 45% of new HIV infections (24,900 of 56,300 total new infections) and 46% of people living with HIV disease in 2006.^{3,4,5}
- The AIDS case rate per 100,000 among Black adults/adolescents was more than 9 times that of whites in 2006 (Figure 2).^{1,13} The AIDS case rate for Black men (82.9) was the highest of any group, followed by Black women (40.4). By comparison, the rate among white men was 11.2.^{1,13} The rate of new infections is also highest among Blacks and was 7 times greater than the rate among whites in 2006.^{3,4}
- HIV-related deaths and HIV death rates are highest among Blacks. Blacks accounted for 56% of deaths due to HIV in 2004⁶ and their survival time after an AIDS diagnosis is lower on average than it is for most other racial/ethnic groups.¹ In 2004, Black men had the highest HIV death rate per 100,000 men aged 25–44 at 39.9; it was 5.5 for white men. The HIV death rate among Black women aged 25–44 was 23.1 compared to 1.3 for white women.¹⁴
- HIV was the 4th leading cause of death for Black men and 3rd for Black women, aged 25–44, in 2005, ranking higher than for their respective counterparts in any other racial/ethnic group.¹⁵

Figure 2: AIDS Case Rate per 100,000 Population, by Race/Ethnicity, for Adults/Adolescents, 2006^{1,13}



Key Trends and Current Cases

- The number of new HIV infections per year among Blacks is down from its peak in the late 1980s, but has exceeded the number of infections among whites since that time; new infections have remained stable in recent years.⁴
- The share of AIDS diagnoses accounted for by Blacks has risen over time, rising from 25% of cases diagnosed in 1985 to 49% in 2006; in recent years, this share has remained relatively stable.^{1,2}
- A recent analysis of 1999-2006 data from a national household survey found that 2% of Blacks in the U.S. (among those aged 18–49) were HIV positive, significantly higher than whites (0.23%). Also, the prevalence of HIV was higher among Black men (2.64%) than Black women (1.49%).¹⁰
- The number of Black Americans living with AIDS increased by 27% between 2002 and 2006, compared to a 19% increase among whites.¹
- The number of deaths among both Blacks and whites with AIDS declined between 2002 and 2006, by 18% and 26%, respectively. Deaths among Hispanics remained stable.¹

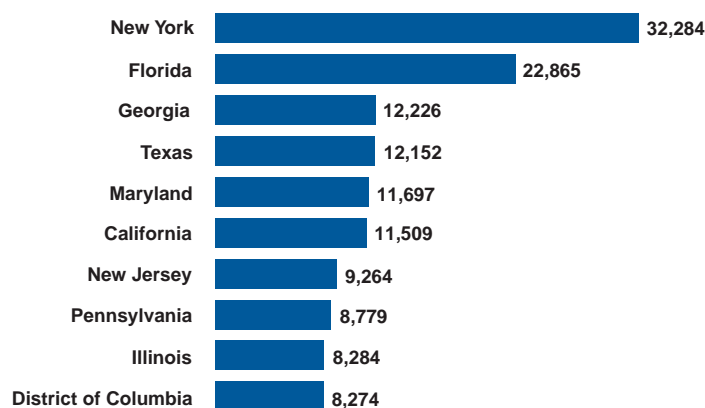
Women and Young People

- Black women account for the largest share of new HIV infections among women (61% in 2006) and the incidence rate among Black women is nearly 15 times the rate among white women.¹⁶
- Black women account for the majority of new AIDS cases among women (66% in 2006); white and Latina women account for 17% and 16% of new AIDS cases, respectively.^{1,11,13}
- Black women represent more than a third (36%) of AIDS cases diagnosed among Blacks (Black men and women combined) in 2006; by comparison, white women represent 15% of AIDS cases diagnosed among whites in 2006.^{1,13}
- Although Black teens (aged 13–19) represent only 16% of U.S. teenagers, they account for 69% of new AIDS cases reported among teens in 2006.¹⁷ A similar impact can be seen among Black children.¹

Transmission

- HIV transmission patterns among Black men vary from those of white men. Although both groups are most likely to have been infected through sex with other men, white men are more likely to have been infected this way. Heterosexual transmission and injection drug use account for a greater share of infections among Black men than white men.^{1,16,18}
- Black women are most likely to have been infected through heterosexual transmission, the most common transmission route for women overall. White women are somewhat more likely to have been infected through injection drug use than Black women.^{1,16,18}
- Among men who have sex with men (MSM), Black MSM have been disproportionately affected. A recent study in 5 major U.S. cities found that 46% of Black MSM in the study were infected with HIV, compared to 21% of white MSM and 17% of Latino MSM. Knowledge of HIV status among those already infected was also very low, particularly among Black MSM.^{19,20} In addition, newly infected Black MSM are younger than their white counterparts with those aged 13–29 accounting for 52% of new infections among Black MSM compared to 25% among whites.¹⁶

Figure 3: Number of Black Americans Estimated to be Living with AIDS: Top 10 States, 2006²¹



Geography

Although AIDS cases among Blacks have been reported throughout the country, the impact of the epidemic is not uniformly distributed:

- AIDS case rates per 100,000 among Blacks are highest in the eastern part of the U.S. The District of Columbia has the highest case rate for Blacks (277.5) in the country.^{13,21}
- Over half (52%) of Blacks estimated to be living with AIDS and 58% of newly reported AIDS cases among Blacks in 2006 occurred in the South; by comparison, Blacks represent approximately 19% of the South's population.^{21,22,23}
- Estimated AIDS prevalence among Blacks is clustered in a handful of states, with 10 states accounting for 71% of Blacks estimated to be living with AIDS in 2006. New York, Florida, and Georgia top the list (Figure 3).^{21,22,23} Ten states also account for a majority of newly reported AIDS cases among Blacks (70% in 2006).^{21,22}

Access to and Use of the Health Care System

- The HIV Cost and Services Utilization Study (HCSUS), the only nationally representative study of people with HIV/AIDS receiving regular or ongoing medical care for HIV infection, found that Blacks fared more poorly on several important measures of access and quality than whites; these differences diminished over time but were not completely eliminated.⁷ HCSUS also found that Blacks were more likely to report postponing medical care because they lacked transportation, were too sick to go to the doctor, or had other competing needs.⁸
- A recent analysis of data from 2000–2002 in 11 HIV primary and specialty care sites in the U.S. found higher rates of hospitalization among Blacks with HIV/AIDS, but differences in outpatient utilization were not significant.⁹

Health Insurance

Having health insurance, either public or private, improves access to care. Insurance coverage of those with HIV/AIDS varies by race/ethnicity, as it does for the U.S. population overall.

- According to HCSUS, Blacks with HIV/AIDS were more likely to be publicly insured or uninsured than their white counterparts, with over half (59%) relying on Medicaid compared to 32% of whites. One fifth of Blacks with HIV/AIDS (22%) were uninsured compared to 17% of whites. Blacks were also much less likely to be privately insured than whites (14% compared to 44%).²⁴
- Insurance status also varies at the time of HIV diagnosis. Analysis of data from 25 states between 1994 and 2000 found that Blacks were less likely than whites to have private coverage and more likely to be covered by Medicaid, or uninsured, at the time of their HIV diagnoses.²⁵

HIV Testing

- Among the U.S. population overall, Blacks are more likely than whites to report ever having been tested for HIV (67% compared to 45%).²⁶
- Among those who are HIV positive, CDC data indicate that 38% of Blacks were tested for HIV late in their illness—that is, diagnosed with AIDS within one year of testing positive for HIV (in those states/areas with HIV name reporting); by comparison, 35% of whites and 42% of Latinos.¹

Concern About HIV/AIDS

- A recent survey found that Black Americans express concern about HIV/AIDS, and are the only racial/ethnic group to name it as the number one health problem in the U.S. However, half (49%) say the U.S. is “losing ground” on the domestic AIDS epidemic; half also say that HIV/AIDS is a more urgent problem in their community than it was a few years ago.²⁶
- Personal concern about becoming infected with HIV is highest among Blacks, as is concern among Black parents about their children becoming infected. However, the proportion of Blacks saying they are personally concerned about becoming infected has declined since the mid-1990's.²⁶

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