



Press release

INTERPRETATION OF INDIA HIV DATA RELEASED ON 25 MAY 2005

This communiqué is issued jointly by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, WHO and UNAIDS.

New Delhi, 1 June 2005

1. The figure of 5.134 million people living with HIV in 2004 has been produced by a methodology and statistical calculation based on serological tests performed in sentinel sites all over India. Comparisons with the estimates of previous years are difficult as methodologies have evolved. The estimations are produced for the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare by the Institute of Research in Medical Statistics and the National Institute of Health and Family Welfare using a methodology supported by WHO and UNAIDS, and monitored by an independent Expert Group. The prevalence figures are vetted by WHO and UNAIDS.
2. HIV prevalence continues to increase in India. There are major inter-state and inter-district disparities. The figure of 0.92% prevalence in the adult population is a national average and some districts have more than 4% of the adults infected.
3. In the states where results have been achieved to slow down the progress of HIV, it is through hard work supported by the government, civil society and development partners. Hence, prevention and control efforts need to be scaled up to prevent further spread of HIV, and notably to address focal epidemics that continue to drive HIV growth in the country.
4. Some recent press reports have inadequately interpreted the number of "new infections" in India. The total of new infections is more than the difference between the estimated prevalence of 2003 and 2004 as it should also include AIDS related deaths. Hence, the number of actual new infections is 28,000 plus the number of deaths due to AIDS.

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