

North America, Western and Central Europe

Latest epidemiological data

- In 2007, the **United States of America** accounted for an estimated 1.2 million [690 000–1.9 million], or roughly 60%, of the 2 million [1.4–2.8 million] people living with HIV in North America and Western and Central Europe. Overall in these regions, 81 000 [30 000–170 000] people became newly infected with HIV and 31 000 [16 000–67 000] died of AIDS-related illnesses.
- On both sides of the Atlantic, the estimated number of people living with HIV continues to increase because of wide access to antiretroviral treatment. However, the regions diverge in terms of new HIV infections—North America has remained relatively stable over recent years, whereas in Western Europe new HIV diagnoses are increasing.

Main modes of HIV transmission

- Across the regions, common drivers of HIV transmission are present.
- Unprotected sex between men is still the main mode of infection in **Canada** and the **United States**, accounting for 40% of new HIV diagnoses in the former in 2006 and 53% in the latter in 2005.
- In several countries in **Western Europe**, higher-risk unprotected sex between men appears to be linked to the increasing numbers of new HIV diagnoses among this group. In **Germany**, new HIV infections among men who have sex with men rose by 96% (to 1370) between 2002 and 2006.
- About one third (32%) of newly diagnosed HIV infections and AIDS cases in the **United States** in 2005 were attributed to high-risk heterosexual intercourse. A similar situation is in Western Europe, where unprotected sex between women and men accounted for the largest share (42%) of new HIV diagnoses in the region in 2006.
- In Western Europe, a diminishing proportion of HIV diagnoses (6% in 2006) are related to use of contaminated injecting equipment. In **Denmark** and the **Netherlands**, the numbers of HIV diagnoses in people who inject drugs fell in by 72% and by 91%, respectively in 2002–2006. In Central Europe, newly reported HIV infections in people who inject drugs have also decreased.

Additional country data¹

- The HIV epidemics in North America continue to disproportionately affect African Americans in the **United States** and Aboriginal persons in **Canada**.
- In 2007, more information became available on the effects of wider access to effective antiretroviral therapy in the **United States**. According to a six-state study, hospital admissions involving people with HIV fell by 44% between 2000 and 2004, and the average age of people with HIV admitted into hospital increased.

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¹ From *North America, Western and Central Europe: AIDS epidemic update 2007, regional summary*