

Caribbean

Overview

- The Caribbean is the second most-affected region in the world after Africa, with an HIV prevalence of 1.6%.
- There were 330,000 people living with HIV in the Caribbean at the end of 2005. Around 22,000 were children under the age of 15.
- Adult women make up 51% of the total number of people living with HIV in the region.
- An estimated 37,000 people became newly infected with HIV in 2005.
- AIDS is the leading cause of death among adults aged 15-44 and claimed an estimated 27,000 lives in 2005.
- Overall less than one in four (23%) of people in need of antiretroviral therapy were receiving treatment in 2005.
- HIV infection levels have decreased in urban parts of **Haiti** and have remained stable in neighbouring **Dominican Republic**. Expanded access to antiretroviral treatment in the **Bahamas** and **Barbados** appears to be reducing AIDS deaths.

Country developments

- **Haiti** is home to more people living with HIV than any other country in the region: 190,000 people. National adult HIV prevalence in 2005 was estimated at 3.8%.
- The percentage of pregnant women infected with HIV in **Haiti** declined by half from 1993 to 2003-2004, notably in urban areas where prevalence fell from 9.4% in 1993 to 3.7% in 2003. Although there is evidence of increasing condom use, abstinence and fidelity, and a reduction in the number of sexual partners, this decline is also attributed to an increased number of AIDS-related deaths and improvements made in blood safety early on in the epidemic. In **Haiti**, fewer than 20% of people needing antiretroviral treatment were receiving it in 2005.
- HIV prevalence in the **Dominican Republic** began to decrease in the mid 1990's but has been relatively stable overall in recent years. Adult national HIV prevalence was estimated at 1.1% in 2005 and similarly to Haiti, less than 20% of those in need of antiretroviral treatment were receiving it in 2005.
- National adult HIV prevalence in the **Bahamas** is among the highest in the region at 3.3%. Improved management and treatment of AIDS appears to have reduced the number of deaths due to AIDS. HIV prevalence among pregnant women declined from 4% in the mid 1990s to less than 3% in 2005.
- In **Barbados**, where national HIV prevalence stood at 1.5% in 2005, the situation is similar. Annual AIDS deaths were halved from 1998–2003. The number of pregnant women living with HIV reduced by half between 1999 and 2003. Expanded counselling

and testing services, along with the provision of antiretroviral regimens have reduced mother-to-child transmission of HIV in both the **Bahamas** and **Barbados**.

- At the end of 2005, **Cuba** had an adult HIV prevalence of 0.1%. There were an estimated 4,800 people living with HIV and less than 500 people died of AIDS-related illnesses. The country's prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV programme is among the most effective in the world and has kept the total number of babies born with HIV to date below 100. **Cuba** also offers free, universal access to antiretroviral therapy, which has limited both the number of AIDS cases and AIDS deaths.
- In **Trinidad and Tobago** national HIV prevalence is estimated at 2.6% with young women particularly affected. Girls in their late teens (15-19 years) are six times as likely to be infected with HIV as their male counterparts.
- In **Guyana**, a serious epidemic is underway, HIV prevalence was at 2.4% in 2005 and AIDS was the leading cause of death among adults aged 25-44.
- National HIV infection levels appear to have stabilized in **Jamaica** and there are signs that HIV prevalence is receding in some places as more **Jamaicans** are protecting themselves against HIV infection. National HIV prevalence was at 1.5% in 2005 and an estimated 25,000 adults and children were living with HIV.

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