

Heads Up: The Rising HIV Rates Among Girls and Women

December 1 was World AIDS Day. The theme was *Women, Girls, HIV, and AIDS*. This theme was chosen because epidemiologists studying the disease are finding that females don't have the same access to AIDS prevention and treatment services as men. In order to understand how AIDS is affecting women, epidemiologists study data showing how the infection rates change over time. The table below presents some recent data. Look at the table, then answer the questions.

How to Fight AIDS in Women

Question: What regions of the world are most in need of increased HIV/AIDS services for women? What kinds of services are needed?

Background Information for Data Interpretation:

The worldwide AIDS epidemic is affecting females in increasing numbers, especially young women and girls. Even so, a recent UNICEF survey found that up to half of young women in countries where AIDS has a high prevalence did not know the basic facts about AIDS. In addition to a lack of education,

researchers say discrimination against women also puts females at risk. Why? Most women and girls get HIV from sex partners who practice high-risk behavior (drug taking and unprotected sex). In many parts of the world, discrimination makes it impossible for women to speak out against the men who endanger them.

Region	2002 Number of Girls and Women Living with HIV (15-49)*	2004 Number of Girls and Women Living with HIV (15-49)*	2002 Total Adults Living with HIV*	2004 Total Adults Living with HIV*
Caribbean	190,000	210,000	388,000	429,000
East Asia	160,000	250,000	760,000	1,100,000
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	330,000	490,000	1,000,000	1,400,000
Latin America	520,000	610,000	1,500,000	1,700,000
North Africa and Middle East	200,000	250,000	420,000	520,000
North America	240,000	260,000	960,000	1,000,000
Oceania	5,000	7,100	28,000	34,000
South and Southeast Asia	1,800,000	2,100,000	6,400,000	7,000,000
Sub-Saharan Africa	12,800,000	13,300,000	22,500,000	23,300,000
Western and Central Europe	150,000	160,000	600,000	640,000
Total*	16,400,000	17,600,000	34,200,000	37,400,000

*All numbers are estimates.

Now that you have examined the data and considered it in light of the background information, answer these questions. Write your answers on the back of this page.

- 1. In what three regions are women most affected by HIV, as a percentage of the population of adults living with HIV?**
- 2. In what region is the HIV infection rate among women growing the fastest, as a percentage of the population of adults living with HIV?**
- 3. If you were in charge of world AIDS policy, what would you do to slow the spread of the disease among girls and women?**