



WHITMAN-WALKER CLINIC

HIV/AIDS and Women

More than 107,000 adult and adolescent females are estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS.

- By the end of 2007 in the United States:
 - Women accounted for 19 percent (201,205) of cumulative AIDS cases
 - Women accounted for 28 percent (92,004) of cumulative HIV cases
 - Women were diagnosed with 9,997 new AIDS cases in 2007
 - 93,984 women had died from AIDS

- Women represent an estimated:
 - 23 percent of new HIV infections
 - 26 percent of new AIDS cases.

The number of women infected with HIV is rapidly growing

- The proportion of new AIDS cases attributed to women has nearly quadrupled, from seven percent in 1985 to 26 percent in 2007.

- In 1992, women accounted for 14 percent of adults and adolescents living with AIDS. By 2007, the proportion had grown to 27 percent.

Heterosexual contact is now the greatest risk of HIV infection for women

- In 2007, most women (45 percent) reported with AIDS were infected through heterosexual exposure to HIV.

- HIV is transmitted eight times more efficiently from men to women than from women to men.

- HIV/AIDS affects women of all ages, but is most prevalent among women in their childbearing years. Centers for Disease Control data from 2001-2003 indicate that 61 percent of female AIDS cases occurred in women between the ages of 25 and 44.

- Women who believe they are safe and engaged in a monogamous relationship may be put at risk by their male partner's unreported or unknown high-risk sexual or drug-related behavior.

- Many HIV/AIDS cases among women in the United States are initially reported without risk information, suggesting that women may be unaware of their partners' risk factors.
- More than two-thirds of AIDS cases among women initially reported without identified risk were later reclassified as heterosexual transmission and just over 25 percent were attributed to injection drug use.

“Survival Sex” increases the risk of becoming infected with HIV

- o Women using drugs are more likely to engage in “survival sex” (trading sex for drugs or money.)
 - In one study, 68 percent of female crack cocaine users had practiced sex in exchange for drugs or money.
 - 30 percent of those women had not practiced safe sex in the past month.

HIV affects women differently

- o HIV infection in women is commonly less severe than men in the beginning stages, but over time the symptoms become more severe than in men.
- o While women benefit from antiretroviral therapy as much as men, they experience more frequent and more significant side effects from the drugs.
- o A government audit found that women are less likely to be given the standard HIV treatment of combination antiretroviral therapy than men.

Sources:

CDC, “Basic Statistics”, <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/stats.htm>

CDC Fact Sheet, “HIV/AIDS and Women,” www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/women/resources/factsheets/women.htm

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