

HIV/AIDS EPIDEMIOLOGY HIGHLIGHT
OCTOBER 1999
THE LATEST TRENDS IN AIDS INCIDENCE AND DEATH, 1995 – 1998

Introduction

Substantial advances have been made in the treatment and care of persons living with HIV infection, resulting in fewer cases of advanced disease and death from AIDS. Since 1996, there have been declines in the number of HIV-infected individuals who are developing AIDS and the number who are dying from AIDS. However, this rate of decline is beginning to stabilize. While AIDS incidence is no longer a good indication of the number of total past HIV infections, it is useful for monitoring those who are not in treatment and those who are not responding to or adhering to treatment.

The rate of AIDS deaths in Ohio decreased 23% between 1995 and 1996, and 54% between 1996 and 1997. In 1998, the rate of death continued to decrease in Ohio, but only by 27%. AIDS incidence also decreased in 1996, followed by a sharper decrease in 1997, and then less of a decrease in 1998 (see Table 1).

Ohio's trends in AIDS incidence and mortality are similar to trends in the United States. These trends indicate that the incidence and mortality rates from AIDS might be starting to stabilize. Several factors might be contributing to the slowing decline in deaths including treatment failure caused by factors such as drug resistance, difficulty with adherence to treatment, and that most individuals who know they are infected with HIV and are susceptible to treatment have been reached.¹

Since current treatment and therapies are quite successful in treating persons with HIV, it is especially important for persons infected with HIV to be identified at early stages of infection so that treatment is not delayed. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that nationally there are approximately 40,000 new HIV infections per year. Since individuals are living longer with HIV infection, it is expected that the number of persons living with HIV infection will continue to increase. Currently in Ohio, 9,355 persons are reported as living with HIV/AIDS. This number only includes known HIV infections reported to the health department. It is estimated that there are between 10,200 and 18,000 persons living with HIV/AIDS in Ohio.

Table 1: Ohio and U.S. Trends in AIDS Incidence and Death, 1995 - 1998
Adjusted for Delays in Reporting

	Number of Cases				% Decline (1995-1996)	%Decline (1996-1997)	%Decline (1997-1998)
	1995	1996	1997	1998			
AIDS INCIDENCE							
Ohio	993	889	675	611	10%	24%	9%
United States	68,734	60,394	49,667	44,289	12%	18%	11%
AIDS DEATHS							
Ohio	904	692	317	231	23%	54%	27%
United States	49,351	36,792	21,222	17,047	25%	42%	20%

Trends in AIDS Incidence and Death, 1995 - 1998

The number of AIDS diagnoses and AIDS deaths have decreased each year from 1995 to 1998 across racial/ethnic groups in both Ohio and the U.S, with the exception of a very slight increase in Ohio AIDS incidence among whites in 1998 (see Table 2). However, the rates of these decreases vary among racial/ethnic groups and vary by year. In 1996 and 1997, for both Ohio and the U.S., the biggest improvements were seen among the dropping number of whites and Hispanics who progressed to AIDS. In 1998, the biggest improvement was seen in the dropping number of African Americans progressing to AIDS, while there was little or no improvement among whites and Hispanics. The largest improvements seen in the drop in AIDS deaths among all racial/ethnic groups for Ohio and the U.S. was in 1997, with the exception of Hispanics in Ohio. In 1998, the number of AIDS deaths continued to decrease, but the improvements were not as large.

**Table 2: Ohio and U.S. Trends in AIDS Incidence and Death, by Race/Ethnicity, 1995 - 1998
Adjusted for Delays in Reporting**

	Number of Cases				% Decline (1995-1996)	%Decline (1996-1997)	%Decline (1997-1998)
	1995	1996	1997	1998			
AIDS INCIDENCE							
Ohio							
White	555	491	319	323	12%	35%	-1%
African American	389	356	330	265	8%	7%	20%
Hispanic	44	38	22	20	14%	42%	9%
United States							
White	26,617	21,188	15,823	13,836	20%	25%	13%
African American	27,832	26,464	23,165	21,051	5%	12%	9%
Hispanic	13,404	11,896	9,994	8,810	11%	16%	12%
AIDS DEATHS							
Ohio							
White	550	419	143	125	24%	66%	13%
African American	320	252	131	96	21%	48%	27%
Hispanic	34	19	14	10	44%	26%	29%
United States							
White	21,441	14,160	6,997	5,436	34%	51%	22%
African American	18,496	15,491	10,060	8,316	16%	35%	17%
Hispanic	8,835	6,724	3,934	3,114	24%	42%	21%

Conclusion

While the number of newly diagnosed cases of AIDS and the number of HIV-related deaths each year have been decreasing in Ohio and the United States since 1996 as a result of new treatments and therapies, this rate of decline is beginning to stabilize. It is important to continue monitoring trends in mortality and the incidence of advanced stage disease to measure the effectiveness of improved treatments, as well as to identify any increases in AIDS incidence and mortality which could be indicative of persons not accessing care or of treatment failures. It is also important to continue prevention efforts to minimize the number of new HIV infections and eventually reduce the prevalence of HIV/AIDS.

For further information on this report, please contact the HIV/AIDS Surveillance program at (614) 466-1388.

¹CDC. News Release August 30, 1999. "New Data Show Continued Decline in AIDS Deaths".