

# STI

# HIV AIDS

# SURVEILLANCE REPORT

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION



REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC

## Revised 1999 HIV/AIDS estimates for the Western Pacific Region

### Overview

Surveillance systems continue to improve in the Region, resulting in better data. The Western Pacific Regional Office works together with Member States to analyze the status, trends and estimates of HIV and AIDS. Regular revision of the estimates, using new data, is an important part of a good epidemiological surveillance system.

Whenever possible, medium term projections (up to five years) for AIDS cases and short-term projections (one to three years) for HIV are also made. These estimates and projections are useful in planning public health action to respond to HIV epidemics and to tailor the response to each epidemics context and changes observed. The previous estimates were released in 1999, and were based on the data of 1998. WPRO has now produced updated HIV and AIDS estimates, based on the data of 1999.

By the end of 1999, it was estimated that almost 900 000 individuals were HIV-infected and that there had been at least new 15 000 cases of AIDS in the year (Figure 1). HIV transmission pattern varies between countries and even within areas in one country. The HIV transmission continues to grow in some areas while it appears to stabilize in others. Four patterns

of HIV transmission are identified in the Region:

- High and increasing HIV incidence – primarily heterosexual transmission in Cambodia and in certain areas of Papua new Guinea;
- High HIV incidence among injecting drug users and increasing HIV heterosexual transmission in China and Viet Nam;
- Declining HIV incidence in Australia and New Zealand;
- Low HIV incidence in all other countries.

The total number of people living with HIV in the Region is expected to pass the 1 million mark before the end of 2000.

### Country analysis

AIDS incidence continued to decrease in Australia and New Zealand. These declines are due to: (i) the introduction of highly active antiretroviral therapy for AIDS patients; and (ii) a stabilized level of infections among men who have sex with men. The 1999 data also confirms declining HIV transmission in these countries, although the HIV prevalence may increase due to declining death of HIV infected patients.

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[www.wpro.who.int](http://www.wpro.who.int)

Cambodia has the most serious HIV epidemic in the Region, with the highest HIV prevalence rate in Asia. HIV transmission is essentially heterosexual. The analysis of the 1999 HIV sero-sentinel epidemiological data suggests that the prevalence of HIV stabilized in the past two years. The estimated prevalence of HIV infection is now at 170 000, a prevalence rate of 3.3% in the most sexually active population (aged 15-49). Further, there is now evidence of a declining incidence of infection among young commercial sex workers. These findings correlate with behavioural surveillance results showing a rapid increase in the proportion of CSW consistently using condoms with clients. These data suggest that the intensive condom promotion programme initiated two years ago in this country is having an impact on HIV transmission. The number of AIDS cases continues to increase rapidly. It is projected that by the year 2005, the annual incidence of AIDS cases will be around 30 000 (25 0000 adults and 5 000 children).

The latest analysis of data from Papua New Guinea show that the HIV transmission is expanding in the capital city Port Moresby, with an HIV prevalence of 16% found in a sample of FSW and a prevalence of 7% among patients attending the STI clinic in the city in 1998. Very few data are available in the rest of the country; HIV prevalence is estimated to be 14 000, 0.6% of the sexually active population (15 to 49 years old).

In the Philippines, the HIV sentinel surveillance system operating in 10 sites continued to detect low HIV

prevalence (< 1%) in the high risk groups. The HIV estimated prevalence has, therefore, been reassessed.

The other estimates provided (Malaysia, Viet Nam, Hong Kong, Japan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Republic of Korea) have been drawn from projections made in the past few years.

The ministry of health has provided the estimates for China. While HIV continues to spread very quickly among injecting drug users, the surveillance system has detected recently an increase of sexual transmission in many areas. Estimates for AIDS cases are not available.

HIV prevalence among female sex workers, and other women (for example, women attending antenatal health services) in Viet Nam appears to be rapidly increasing in selected areas. This is the case in southern Viet Nam where 19% of FSW were found HIV infected in Ho Chi Minh City in September 1999.

In all other countries and areas in the Region, existing data still show low HIV prevalence rates.

Some countries and areas in the Region are still not experiencing a severe HIV epidemic. The opportunity for maintaining HIV transmission under control still exists and all efforts should be made to implement effective programmes targeting the most at risk of infection.

Table 1. HIV and AIDS Estimates for the Western Pacific Region, 1999

Country area	Estimated HIV prevalence (age 15-49)	Estimated HIV prevalence rate (age 15-49)	Estimated AIDS incidence	Status of Epidemic
Cambodia	170 000	3.3%	10 000	stabilizing; heterosexual
Papua New Guinea	14 000	0.6%	150	expanding in selected areas; heterosexual transmission
Malaysia	50 000 *	0.4%	900	stable; mostly IDU
Viet Nam	100 000 *	0.2%	3 700	expanding; IDU, heterosexual transmission increasing rapidly
Singapore	3 000	0.1%	> 120	stable
Australia	14 000	0.1%	+/- 200	declining; mostly homosexual
China	500 000	<0.1%	n/a	expanding; mostly IDU; heterosexual transmission increasing
Hong Kong	3 700*	<0.1%	+/- 60	stable
Japan	8 100*	<0.1%	+/- 200	stable
Lao, PDR	1 400*	<0.1%	>50	stable
New Zealand	1 200	<0.1%	+/- 30	declining; mostly homosexual
Philippines	+/- 10 000	<0.1%	> 50	slowly expanding; heterosexual
Korea, Republic of	3 800*	<0.1%	+/- 30	stable
Total	> 879 200	-	>> 15 490	

\* Based on projections