

**AIDS PROJECT LOS ANGELES  
HIV RESOURCE CENTER**

**FACT SHEET # 2**

**AIDS AMONG WOMEN -- UNITED STATES, 1994**

February 27, 1995

- In 1993, HIV/AIDS was the fourth leading cause of death among women aged 25-44 in the United States.
- The incidence of AIDS is increasing more rapidly among women than men.

**In 1994:**

- women with AIDS represented 13% of the cumulative total of 58,448 cases among women.
- of the 79,674 persons 13 years or older reported with AIDS, 14,081 (18%) occurred among women -- nearly threefold greater than the proportion (534 [7%] of 8,153) reported in 1985.
- the median age of women reported with AIDS was 35 years, and women aged 15-44 years accounted for 84% of cases.
- more than three fourths (77%) of cases among women occurred among blacks and Hispanics, and rates for black and Hispanic women were 16 and seven times higher, respectively, than those for white women.
- the Northeast region accounted for the largest percentage of AIDS cases reported among women (44%), followed by the South (36%), West (9%), Midwest (7%), and Puerto Rico and U.S. territories (4%).
- of all cases among women, 61% were reported from five states: New York (26%), Florida (13%), New Jersey (10%), California (7%), and Texas (5%).
- 59% of AIDS cases among women were reported based on criteria added in the 1993 expanded AIDS surveillance case definition. This total included 7,181 women with severe HIV-related immunosuppression (percentage of total lymphocytes <14% or CD4 <200 cells), 557 with pulmonary TB, 376 with recurrent pneumonia, and 164 with invasive cervical cancer.
- 41% of women with AIDS reported injecting-drug use; 38%, heterosexual contact with a partner at risk for or known to have HIV /AIDS; and 2%, recipient of contaminated blood or blood products; 19% had no specific HIV exposure reported. Of all women who were initially reported without risk but who were later reclassified, most had heterosexual contact with an at-risk partner (66%) or a history of injecting-drug use (27%).
- of the 5,353 women reported with AIDS attributed to heterosexual contact, 38% reported contact with a male partner who was an injecting drug user; 7% , a bisexual male; 2%, a partner who had hemophilia or had received HIV-infected blood or blood products; and 53% , a partner who had documented HIV infection or AIDS but whose risk was unspecified..



## HIV SEROPREVALENCE IN CHILDBEARING WOMEN

Using findings from the HIV Survey in Childbearing Women, an estimated 7,000 HIV-infected women delivered infants in the United States during 1993. Assuming a perinatal transmission rate of 15%-30%, approximately 1,000-2,000 infants were perinatally infected with HIV during 1993.

From 1989 through 1993, the annual prevalence of HIV infection among childbearing women remained relatively stable (1.6-1.7 per 1,000), although prevalence varied regionally: the Northeast, prevalence decreased from 4.1 to 3.4 per 1,000; in the South, prevalence increased from 1.6 in 1989 to 2.0 in 1991 and remained stable through 1993.

## SUMMARY

In 1994, as in previous years, the AIDS epidemic among women continued to disproportionately affect racial/ethnic minorities, primarily in the Northeast and South. AIDS among women was primarily associated with two modes of HIV transmission: injecting-drug use and heterosexual contact with an at-risk partner. The proportion of women in 1994 with unreported risk will decrease substantially after investigation by local and state health departments because, after follow-up, most women are found to have a recognized risk for HIV. Heterosexual contact is the most rapidly increasing transmission category for women.

Source: *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* (February 10, 1995/ Vol. 44/ No.5)