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CDC offers explanations for 15% increase in HIV diagnoses from 2004-2007

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report: Cases of HIV infection and AIDS in the United States and U.S. Territories, 2007, from 2004 through 2007, the estimated number of newly diagnosed HIV/AIDS cases in the 34 states with confidential name-based HIV infection reporting increased 15%.

Why does CDC's new HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report show that from 2004-2007, HIV diagnoses increased 15% in the 34 states that have long-term, name-based HIV reporting?

The four main reasons that could explain the increase in diagnoses are as follows:

- The increase in new diagnoses may be due to changes in state reporting regulations.
- There may be more people getting tested for HIV, which could result in more new diagnoses.
- The increase in new diagnoses may be linked to instability in the data.
- There may actually be an increase in new HIV infections.

Are there increases in certain races/ethnicities, age groups, or transmission categories that stand out, or is there an across-the-board increase?

Increases in annual estimates of HIV/AIDS diagnoses were seen among subpopulations.

- From 2004 to 2007, there was a 26% increase in estimated annual HIV/AIDS diagnoses among men who have sex with men. This increase may represent an increase in HIV incidence in MSM, which was found in the recent incidence data. It may also be affected by increases in testing.
- During this same period, a 9% increase in annual diagnoses was seen among male high-risk heterosexuals, and a 14% increase among females.
- There were increases in annual diagnoses among all racial/ethnic groups.



What do HIV diagnoses data tell us that cannot be discerned from incidence data?

Estimates from CDC's new HIV incidence surveillance system provide the clearest picture to date of new infections (HIV incidence), both overall and among the most affected populations. However, HIV diagnosis data are needed to provide a measure of the burden of disease, testing, prevalence, and treatment/care needs.



Also, despite the potential limitations of using HIV diagnosis data as a proxy measurement for HIV incidence, data on HIV diagnoses continue to provide the best information on the distribution of HIV infection in areas that do not collect data for HIV incidence surveillance; areas without sufficient incidence data; smaller populations (such as smaller racial/ethnic groups), in which it may not be possible to generate reliable HIV incidence estimates; young people, ages 13-24, due to their recent infections.

The 15% increase covers years 2004-2007. Was there an increase in diagnoses in each year?

The annual number of HIV/AIDS diagnoses remained stable from 2004 through 2006. A 15% increase in annual HIV/AIDS diagnoses from 2006 to 2007 accounts for the majority of the increase seen from 2004 to 2007. As we know, the most recent year of data is the most subject to change as the estimation models include a degree of uncertainty.

Sources: Adapted from: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Questions and Answers: The 15% Increase in HIV Diagnoses from 2004-2007 in 34 States and General Surveillance Report Questions. February 2009. Retrieved March 2, 2009 from http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/resources/qa/surv_rep.htm.

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