

SANKOFA FACT SHEET

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HIV/AIDS among African-American Youth

Young people in the United States are at persistent risk for HIV infection. This risk is especially notable for youth of minority races and ethnicities. Continual prevention outreach and education efforts are required as new generations replace the generations that benefited from earlier prevention strategies [1].

STATISTICS

Cumulative Effects of HIV Infection and AIDS (through 2003)

According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data through December 2001, African-Americans were the largest group of young people affected by HIV. They accounted for 56 percent of all HIV infections ever reported among those ages 13-24 [2].

In the seven cities that participated in CDC's Young Men's Survey during 1994-1998, 14 percent of African American MSM ages 15-22 were infected with HIV [3]. Young men who have sex with men (MSM), especially those of minority races or ethnicities, were at high risk for HIV infection.

RISK FACTORS AND BARRIERS TO PREVENTION

Sexual Risk Factors

- **Heterosexual transmission.** Young women, especially those of minority races or ethnicities, are increasingly at risk for HIV infection through heterosexual contact. According to data from a CDC study of HIV prevalence among disadvantaged youth during the early to mid-1990s, the rate of HIV prevalence among young women ages 16-21 was 50 percent higher than the rate among young men in that age group [4].

- **Continued Impact of HIV on Young African-American Women.** Young disadvantaged women, particularly African-American women, are being infected with HIV at younger ages and at higher rates than their male counterparts, according to a CDC study published in the September 1998 issue of the *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes and Human Retrovirology (JAIDS)*. The study presents data from 1990 through 1996 on the rates of HIV infection among entrants to the U.S. Job Corps program, a federally-funded job training program for disadvantaged out-of-school youth from all 50 states and U.S. territories. While not representative of all youth, these data provide a snapshot of the continuing toll of HIV among the many young people in the United States who are economically disadvantaged [5].

The results indicate that of the over 350,000 16- to 21-year-olds tested, more than 2 per 1,000 were HIV-infected, with rates among young African-American women exceeding 5 per 1,000. Young African-American women had the highest HIV infection rate of any group [5].

AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTED

HIV prevalence among young African-American women was seven times higher than for young white women and eight times higher than for young Hispanic women (rates were 4.9 per 1,000, 0.7 per 1,000 and 0.6 per thousand, respectively). By age 20, the HIV infection rate for African-American women in the study was 7 per 1,000 [5].

References: 1. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pubs/facts/youth.htm>.

2. CDC. *HIV/Prevention in the Third Decade*. Atlanta: US Department of Health and Human Services, CDC; 2003. Available at http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/HIV_3rdDecade/. Accessed August 16, 2004.

3. CDC. HIV incidence among young men who have sex with men—seven US cities, 1994-2000. *MMWR* 2001;50:440-444.

4. Valleroy L, MacKellar D, Karon J, et al. HIV infection in disadvantaged out-of-school youth: prevalence for U.S. Job Corps entrants, 1990 through 1996. *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes* 1998; 19:67-73.

5. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/od/news/JobCorps.htm>

For more information, call the **Mississippi Urban Research Center** at: 1-866-JSU-MURC (578-6872).

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