



Government of India
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
Department of AIDS Control
National AIDS Control Organisation

PRESS RELEASE

HIV declining in India; New infections reduced by 50% from 2000-2009; Sustained focus on prevention required.

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The HIV estimates 2008-09 highlight an overall reduction in adult HIV prevalence and HIV incidence (new infections) in India. Adult HIV prevalence at national level has declined from 0.41% in 2000 to 0.31% in 2009, although variations exist across the states. The estimated number of new annual HIV infections has declined by more than 50% over the past decade.

Mr K Chandramouli, Secretary to Government of India, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and Director General, National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) said, "As part of the Government of India's keen focus on generating strategic information towards stronger evidence-based programming and result-oriented action, the National AIDS Control Organisation has reinforced its commitment to quality data generation and utilisation. By scaling up the surveillance system over the previous decade and drawing on technical expertise of national and international organisations, quality and validity of the data generated by India under 2008-09 round of surveillance, and the most recent estimates based on it, is ensured. The 2008-09 HIV estimates will not only enable an assessment of the effectiveness and coverage of current HIV interventions, but also support identification of potential areas where HIV is increasing."

"India's investments in the AIDS response are producing results," said Mr Michel Sidibé, Executive Director, UNAIDS. "India's success comes from using an evidence-informed and human rights-based approach that is backed by sustained political leadership and civil society engagement. India must now strive to achieve universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support."

Improved methodology for generating HIV estimates

The 2008-09 India HIV estimates—developed by NACO with support from National Institute of Medical Sciences, National Institute of Health and Family Welfare, UNAIDS and WHO — utilised improved methodology and updated epidemiological data from the latest rounds of HIV Sentinel Surveillance and other information on High Risk Groups for more accurate understanding of the Indian epidemic. The estimates were generated using Estimation Projection Package and Spectrum Package, that had been customised using Indian data. This methodology allows international comparison of the HIV estimates.

Key findings of the 2008-2009 HIV estimates

HIV Incidence

One of the key characteristics of this round of estimations is that it allowed for generating estimates of the HIV incidence (number of new HIV infections per year). Analysis of epidemic projections revealed that the number of new annual HIV infections has declined by more than

50% during the last decade. This is one of the most important evidence on the impact of the various interventions under National AIDS Control Programme and scaled-up prevention strategies. It is estimated that India had approximately 1.2 lakh new HIV infections in 2009, as against 2.7 lakh in 2000.

While this trend is evident in most states, some low prevalence states have shown a slight increase in the number of new infections over the past two years, that underscores the need for the programme to focus more on these states with low prevalence, but high vulnerability.

Of the 1.2 lakh estimated new infections in 2009, the six high prevalence states account for only 39% of the cases, while the states of Orissa, Bihar, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat account for 41% of new infections.

Adult HIV prevalence

The estimated adult HIV prevalence in India was 0.32% (0.26% – 0.41%) in 2008 and 0.31% (0.25% – 0.39%) in 2009. The adult prevalence is 0.26% among women and 0.38% among men in 2008, and 0.25% among women and 0.36% among men in 2009.

Among the states, Manipur has shown the highest estimated adult HIV prevalence of 1.40%, followed by Andhra Pradesh (0.90%), Mizoram (0.81%), Nagaland (0.78%), Karnataka (0.63%) and Maharashtra (0.55%). Besides these states, Goa, Chandigarh, Gujarat, Punjab and Tamil Nadu have shown estimated adult HIV prevalence greater than national prevalence (0.31%), while Delhi, Orissa, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh & Puducherry have shown estimated adult HIV prevalence of 0.28-0.30%. All other states/UTs have lower levels of HIV. (See Annex-1)

Declining Trends of Adult HIV Prevalence

The adult HIV prevalence at national level has continued its steady decline from estimated level of 0.41% in 2000 through 0.36% in 2006 to 0.31% in 2009. All the high prevalence states show a clear declining trend in adult HIV prevalence. HIV has declined notably in Tamil Nadu to reach 0.33% in 2009. However, the low prevalence states of Chandigarh, Orissa, Kerala, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Jammu & Kashmir, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya show rising trends in adult HIV prevalence in the last four years.

A clear decline is also evident in HIV prevalence among the young population (15-24 yrs) at national level, both among men and women. Stable to declining trends in HIV prevalence among the young population (15-24 yrs) are also noted in most of the states. However, rising trends are noted in some states including Orissa, Assam, Chandigarh, Kerala, Jharkhand and Meghalaya.

People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLHA)

The total number of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHA) in India is estimated at 24 lakh (19.3 – 30.4) in 2009. Children (<15 yrs) account for 3.5% of all infections, while 83% are the in age group 15-49 years. Of all HIV infections, 39% (9.3 lakh) are among women. The four high prevalence states of South India (Andhra Pradesh – 5 lakh, Maharashtra – 4.2 lakh, Karnataka – 2.5 lakh, Tamil Nadu – 1.5 lakh) account for 55% of all HIV infections in the country. West Bengal, Gujarat, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh are estimated to have more than 1 lakh PLHA each and together account for another 22% of HIV infections in India. The states of Punjab, Orissa, Rajasthan & Madhya Pradesh have 50,000 – 1 lakh HIV infections each and together account for another 12% of HIV infections. These states, in spite of low HIV prevalence, have large number of PLHA due to the large population size. (See Annex-1)

HIV concentrated amongst injecting drug users and Men who have Sex with Men

This round of estimates has confirmed the clear decline of HIV prevalence among Female Sex Workers at national levels and in most states. However, the evidence shows that Injecting Drug Users and Men who have Sex with Men are more and more vulnerable to HIV with increasing trends in many states.

AIDS deaths:

Using globally accepted methodologies and updated evidence on survival to HIV with and without treatment, it is estimated that about 1.72 lakh people died of AIDS related causes in 2009 in India. Wider access to ART has resulted in a decline of the number of people dying due to AIDS related causes. The trend of annual AIDS deaths is showing a steady decline since the roll out of free ART programme in India in 2004.

Sustained action for advancement towards Universal Access

India's response to the HIV epidemic and the broad social mobilisation of stakeholders has achieved significant results in controlling the HIV epidemic. The achievements warrant the need for further commitment and coordinated joint action that is guided by the best available scientific evidence and technical knowledge.

Evident from the 2008-2009 HIV estimates, NACP-III has yielded significant results in addressing previously existing gaps in the AIDS response, as well as the social and structural constraints. There is need, however, to build on the gains and focus on the emerging areas of concern. Spread of HIV in the low prevalence and vulnerable states must be thwarted through sustainable effort and investment on prevention, coupled with innovative strategies.

According to Mr. Chandramouli, "Given the diversity of the epidemic and the increasing prevalence amongst specific populations and geographical locations, we need to renew our commitment to adapt and strengthen HIV prevention strategies. Close engagement with civil society and people living with and affected by HIV will prevent new infections and produce measurable impacts. We need also to protect people most affected, and promote human and gender rights. For this, India is working towards a comprehensive response to AIDS that unifies forces of stakeholders and integrates HIV prevention, treatment, care and support."

Statewise Estimated Adult (15-49) HIV Prevalence and Number of HIV Infections with Uncertainty Bounds, 2009						
State/UT	Estimated Adult HIV Prevalence, 2009 (%)			Estimated Number of HIV Infections, 2009		
	Estimate	Uncertainty bounds		Estimate	Uncertainty bounds	
		Lower	Upper		Lower	Upper
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	0.26	0.19	0.36	395	292	536
Andhra Pradesh	0.90	0.77	1.07	4,99,620	4,24,214	5,96,011
Arunachal Pradesh	0.16	0.12	0.22	1,082	808	1,481
Assam	0.08	0.06	0.12	14,244	10,400	21,599
Bihar	0.22	0.18	0.27	1,20,470	1,00,493	1,47,676
Chandigarh	0.39	0.32	0.47	3,067	2,571	3,716
Chattisgarh	0.28	0.20	0.38	39,774	29,188	53,885
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	0.15	0.11	0.20	285	217	383
Daman & Diu	0.16	0.12	0.21	251	192	336
Delhi	0.30	0.25	0.36	34,216	28,735	41,076
Goa	0.49	0.31	0.73	5,440	3,584	8,027
Gujarat	0.37	0.30	0.55	1,36,875	1,09,952	2,00,826
Haryana	0.10	0.09	0.13	15,852	13,189	19,122
Himachal Pradesh	0.19	0.16	0.24	8,878	7,105	11,069
Jammu & Kashmir	0.08	0.06	0.11	5,403	3,971	7,444
Jharkhand	0.13	0.11	0.17	23,574	19,133	29,301
Karnataka	0.63	0.46	0.88	2,45,522	1,79,205	3,35,119
Kerala	0.19	0.15	0.24	40,060	32,654	49,352
Madhya Pradesh	0.19	0.16	0.24	84,803	69,916	1,03,540
Maharashtra	0.55	0.44	0.71	4,19,789	3,31,891	5,48,366
Manipur	1.40	1.16	1.64	26,773	22,113	32,374
Meghalaya	0.08	0.06	0.12	1,332	1,002	1,921
Mizoram	0.81	0.60	1.12	6,025	4,448	8,361
Nagaland	0.78	0.66	0.93	13,120	11,005	15,578
Orissa	0.29	0.24	0.37	71,813	58,879	90,117
Puducherry	0.28	0.22	0.36	2,254	1,768	2,860
Punjab	0.32	0.26	0.39	56,928	47,077	67,967
Rajasthan	0.19	0.16	0.23	76,316	63,998	92,466
Sikkim	0.06	0.05	0.08	231	173	296
Tamil Nadu	0.33	0.26	0.41	1,54,742	1,21,000	1,94,611
Tripura	0.15	0.10	0.21	3,425	2,381	4,845
Uttar Pradesh	0.09	0.08	0.11	1,09,352	90,199	1,37,193
Uttarakhand	0.10	0.07	0.15	5,539	3,893	8,597
West Bengal	0.29	0.24	0.35	1,67,994	1,38,348	2,06,930
India	0.31	0.25	0.39	23,95,444	19,33,994	30,42,981