

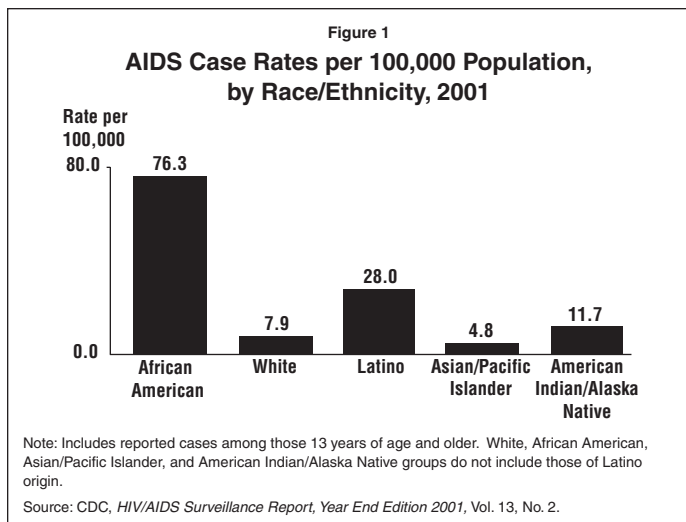
African Americans and HIV/AIDS

September 2003

African Americans have been disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS since the epidemic's beginning and the disparity has deepened over time.¹ African Americans represent 12% of the U.S. population but now account for more than half of all new HIV infections estimated to occur in the U.S. each year and approximately half of newly reported AIDS cases.² They account for more people estimated to be living with AIDS and more deaths among persons with AIDS than any other racial/ethnic group. HIV was the number one cause of death for African Americans between the ages of 25 and 44 in 2000. The epidemic has had a disproportionate impact on different subgroups of African Americans including women, teens, children, and men who have sex with men, and the epidemic's impact varies across the country. Moreover, African Americans with HIV/AIDS may face additional barriers to accessing care than their white counterparts.¹

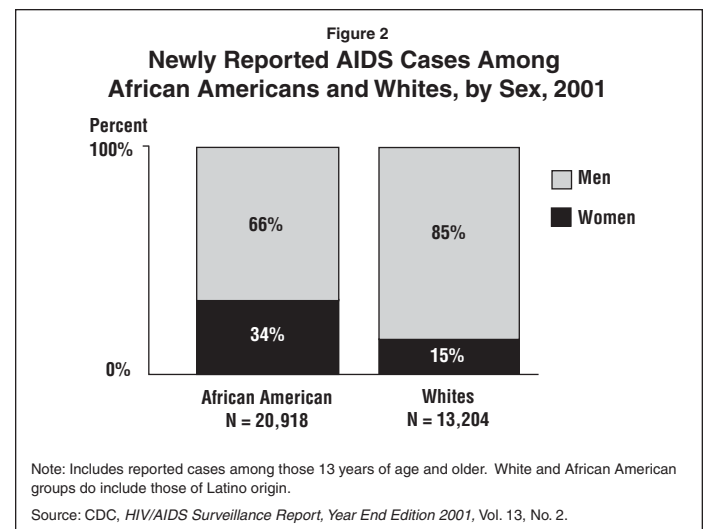
Snapshot of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic

- African Americans account for more than a third (38%) of the 816,149 AIDS cases reported since the beginning of the epidemic and about half (49%) of the 43,158 cases reported in 2001 alone. The number of AIDS cases reported among African Americans in 2001 was greater than for any other racial/ethnic group.³
- African Americans account for more than half (54%) of the 40,000 new HIV infections estimated to occur in the U.S. each year.⁴
- As of the end of 2001, there were 151,530 African Americans estimated to be living with AIDS, or 42% of the total.⁵
- HIV was the leading cause of death for African Americans ages 25–44 in 2000, compared to the 5th leading cause of death for whites and 4th for Latinos in this age group.⁶
- In 2001, the AIDS case rate among African American adults/adolescents was almost 10 times higher than among whites (76.3 per 100,000 compared to 7.9).³
- More than a third of African Americans (35%) say HIV/AIDS is the most urgent health problem facing the nation, compared to 13% of whites, and African Americans are much more likely to say they are personally concerned about becoming infected (55% compared to 26% of whites). However, concern among African Americans, as well as the public overall, has been decreasing over time.⁷



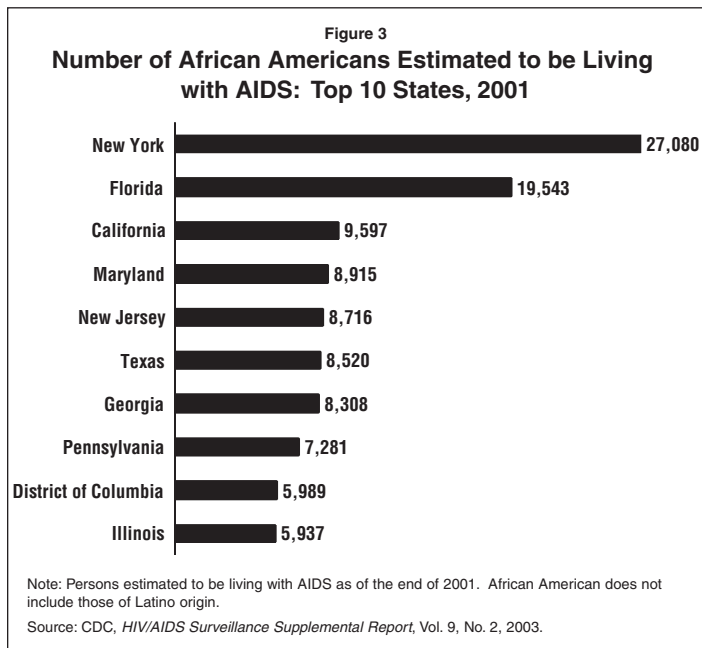
Key Trends and Current Cases

- The AIDS case rate for African American men in 2001 was 8 times that of white men (109.2 per 100,000 compared to 13.7). Among women, the AIDS case rate for African American women was almost 20 times the rate for white women (47.8 per 100,000 compared to 2.4).³
- Although African American men still account for most new AIDS cases and HIV infections among African Americans, African American women account for a growing share. In 1991, African American women represented 22% of new AIDS cases reported among all African Americans; by 2001, African American women represented more than one third (34%) of new cases reported among all African Americans.^{3,8}
- While women represent a growing share of new AIDS cases overall, this trend is more pronounced within the African American population. African American women accounted for a third (34%) of newly reported AIDS cases reported among all African Americans in 2001 while white women represented 15% of new AIDS cases reported among whites.^{3,8} Further, in 2001, African American women accounted for a much greater number of new AIDS cases than white women.³



- HIV transmission patterns among African American men vary from those of white men, although both groups are most likely to be infected through sex with other men. A greater proportion of white men are estimated to have been infected through sex with other men than African American men (73% compared to 43%). Thirty percent of African American men are estimated to have been infected through injection drug use, compared to 13% of white men; 21% of African American men are estimated to have been infected through heterosexual contact compared to 5% of white men.^{3,9}
- African American women and white women are most likely to have been infected through heterosexual contact (67% of African American women and 59% of white women). Thirty percent of African American women and 38% of white women are estimated to have been infected through injection drug use.^{3,9}

- Although, African American teens (ages 13–19) represent only 15% of U.S. teenagers, they accounted for almost two thirds (61%) of new AIDS cases reported among teens in 2001.¹⁰ A similar impact can be seen among African American children under the age of 13.³
- The epidemic has had a disproportionate impact on African American men who have sex with men (MSM). In a recent study in 6 major U.S. cities, almost one third (32%) of African American MSM ages 23–29 were already infected with HIV, compared to 7% of white MSM. HIV incidence among young African American MSM was also the highest of any racial/ethnic group.¹¹
- Although AIDS cases among African Americans have been reported in every state, the impact of the epidemic is not uniformly distributed across the country. AIDS case rates per 100,000 among African Americans are highest in the eastern part of the U.S., particularly in the Northeast.¹²
- Estimated AIDS prevalence among African Americans is clustered in a handful of states, with 10 states accounting for 73% of African Americans estimated to be living with AIDS. Ten metropolitan areas account for nearly half (48%) of African Americans estimated to be living with AIDS.⁵



- During the 1990s, important new advances in the treatment of HIV disease, coupled with prevention efforts, led to declines in the number of new AIDS cases and deaths among people with AIDS across all racial/ethnic groups. However, not all groups benefited at the same rate:
 - AIDS cases among African Americans declined by 45% between 1993 and 2001, compared to a 73% decline among whites.³
 - Estimated deaths among African Americans with AIDS declined by 49% between 1993 and 2001 compared to an 80% decline for whites.³
 - As with all racial/ethnic groups, the number of African Americans living with AIDS has increased largely due to treatment advances but also to the epidemic's increasing impact on minorities in the U.S. Estimated AIDS prevalence among African Americans increased by 150% between 1993 and 2001 compared to a 68% increase among whites.³

Testing and Care

- African Americans are more likely than other racial/ethnic groups to report ever having been tested for HIV. In 2000, more than half (58%) of African Americans reported ever having been tested for HIV, compared to 43% of the population overall.¹³

- However, some African Americans may be tested for HIV late in their illness—that is, diagnosed with AIDS at the time of their first HIV test or developing AIDS within one year of testing positive.^{14,15} A CDC study in 25 states found that between 1994 and 1999, more than one third (38%) of African Americans were tested late compared to 45% of whites and 48% of Latinos.¹⁴ However, a more recent but more limited study in 16 sites found that African Americans and Latinos were more likely to be tested late than whites (57% and 62% compared to 42%, respectively).¹⁵
- The HIV Cost and Services Utilization Study (HCSUS), a nationally representative study of people with HIV/AIDS in care in 1996, found that African Americans with HIV/AIDS were more likely to be publicly insured or uninsured than their white counterparts, with over half (59%) relying on Medicaid compared to 32% of whites. About one fifth of African Americans with HIV/AIDS (22%) were uninsured compared to 17% of whites. African Americans were much less likely to be privately insured than whites (14% compared to 44%).¹⁶
- The HCSUS study found that African Americans fared more poorly on several important measures of access and quality. These differences diminished over time but were not completely eliminated.¹⁷ African Americans were also more likely to report postponing medical care because they lacked transportation, were too sick to go to the doctor or had other competing needs.¹⁸

In the early years of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the United States, the impact of HIV/AIDS on African Americans was not widely recognized. Today, however, by most measures, African Americans are the most significantly affected racial/ethnic group in the U.S., as reflected in incidence, prevalence, and mortality trends over time. These trends present tremendous challenges for policymakers, community leaders, and public health practitioners. The drop in the levels of concern expressed by African Americans and the public overall about HIV/AIDS as a personal problem and a problem for the nation⁷ highlights the need for increased vigilance and attention to the epidemic's impact on African Americans today.

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