

Latinos and HIV/AIDS

September 1999

Latinos living in the US have been disproportionately affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Although Latinos represent just 11% of the US population, they represented 20% of new AIDS cases in 1998; this is up from 17% in 1990 and 13% in 1982.^{1,2,3,4} An estimated 110,000 to 170,000 Latinos are *living with HIV*.⁵ Of these, over 52,000 are estimated to be *living with AIDS*.² While treatment advances have helped to reduce the number of deaths from AIDS in recent years, disparities remain.²

Disproportionate Impact

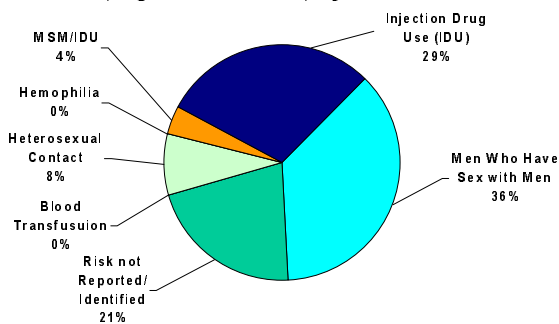
- Between 1996 and 1997, deaths due to AIDS in the US dropped by 44% among Latinos compared to 53% among whites.²
- HIV was the 10th leading cause of death among Latinos in the US in 1997 but was no longer in the top 10 causes of death for the nation or for whites overall.⁶
- Among those aged 25-44, HIV was the 3rd leading cause of death for Latinos in 1997, compared to 5th for whites.⁶
- The number of new AIDS cases for every 100,000 Latinos (the "AIDS case rate") was more than 3 times the rate among whites (28.1 compared to 8.2 in 1998).²
- The disparity is most pronounced among Latinas, aged 13 and older, for whom the AIDS case rate was almost 7 times that of white women (16.6 compared to 2.4 per 100,000). Among Latino men, the AIDS case rate was 3.3 times that of white men (58.2 compared to 17.8 per 100,000 in 1998).²
- While the number of babies born with HIV has decreased significantly in recent years due to the availability of treatment that dramatically reduces the chances of HIV transmission during pregnancy, the AIDS case rate among Latino children was almost 5 times that of white children in 1998 (0.9 cases compared to 0.2 cases per 100,000).^{2,7}
- There is also evidence of disparities in access to HIV care for Latinos compared to whites. A recent nationally representative study of people with HIV who were receiving medical care found that Latinos were less likely to receive combination therapy (the standard of care) than

whites and fared poorer on other access indicators.⁸ Studies have also shown that Latinos may learn of their HIV status later in illness.⁹

Current Profile of New AIDS Cases

- Latino men, like men overall, are most likely to be infected through sex with other men (36% in 1998). Injection drug use accounts for a greater proportion of new cases among Latino men than white men (29% compared to 11%).²

Breakdown of Reported AIDS Cases in 1998 Among Latino Men, Age 13 and Older, by Means of Infection

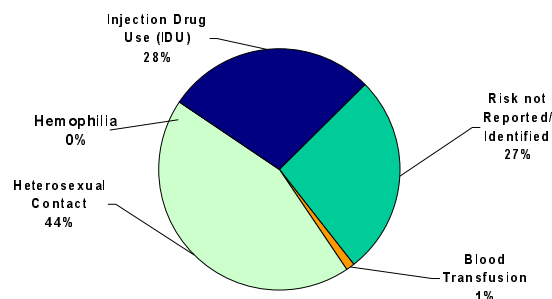


N=7,511

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (1998). *HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report, Year-End Edition, US HIV and AIDS Cases Reported Through December 1998*, 10 (2).

- Latinas are more likely to be infected through heterosexual contact than white women (44% compared to 38% in 1998). Approximately 28% of AIDS cases among Latinas are directly the result of injection drug use, compared to 35% of cases among white women.²

Breakdown of Reported AIDS Cases in 1998 Among Latinas, Age 13 and Older, by Means of Infection



N=2,055

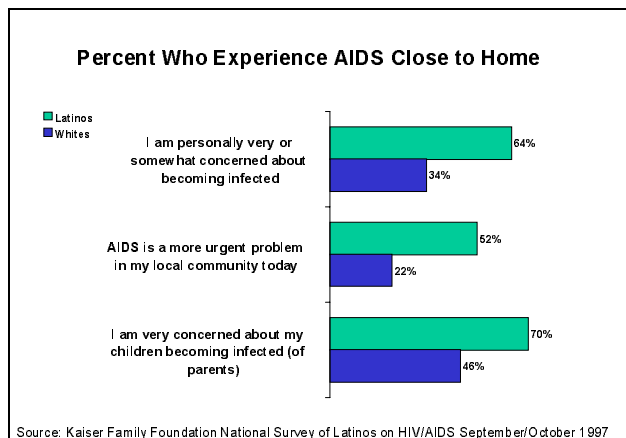
Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (1998). *HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report, Year-End Edition, US HIV and AIDS Cases Reported Through December 1998*, 10 (2).

Current Profile Continued...

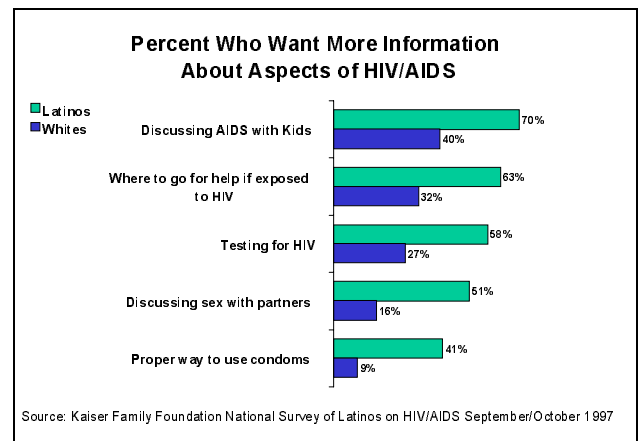
- Although the majority of new AIDS cases among Latinos, ages 13 and older, continued to be among men (79%), a growing proportion (one fifth or 21%) were among Latinas in 1998, up from 15% in 1990.^{2,4}
- The impact of HIV/AIDS on the Latino population in the US varies by region. AIDS case rates among Latinos are highest in the Northeastern states.¹⁰
- Of reported AIDS cases in 1998, 56% were among Latinos born in the US, including 27% among Latinos born in Puerto Rico. One in ten (10%) were among those born in Mexico, 7% among those born in Central/South America, and 2% among those born in Cuba. Twenty-two percent were among those whose place of birth was unknown. Research suggests that most Latinos with HIV now living in the US were infected in this country.^{2,11}
- Latinos born in Puerto Rico were more likely to be exposed to HIV through injection drug use while Latinos born in Mexico, Central/South America, and Cuba were more likely to be infected through sex with other men.

Attitudes, Knowledge, and Information Needs¹²

- Two thirds of Latinos (aged 18 and over) living in the US are personally “very” or “somewhat concerned” about becoming infected with HIV (64%), compared to 34% of whites. Latino parents are also more concerned about their children getting HIV (70% are very concerned compared to 46% of whites).



- Latinos are more than twice as likely as whites to say that AIDS is a more urgent problem in their local communities than just a few years ago (52% of Latinos compared to 22% of whites).
- Latinos say they want more information about HIV, including how to talk with their children about AIDS, HIV testing, and condom use.



Cultural Context for AIDS Education, Prevention, and Treatment

The nation's Latino population is culturally and ethnically diverse. It is also younger, disproportionately poor, and has lower educational attainment than the US population as a whole. In addition, a language barrier may exist for some. Values and traditions unique to Latino culture play an important role in shaping attitudes and behaviors with respect to sex, sexuality, drug use, and HIV/AIDS. These factors and values should be taken into account in designing AIDS education, prevention, and treatment programs.¹⁰

References

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- ⁵ Karon, J.M. et al. (1996). "Prevalence of HIV Infection in the United States, 1984 to 1992", *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Vol. 276, No. 2.
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- ⁸ Shapiro, M.F., et al. (1999). "Variations in the Care of HIV-Infected Adults in the United States", *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Vol. 281, No. 24.
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- ¹⁰ Marin, BV and Gomez, CA, "Latinos and HIV: Cultural Issues in AIDS Prevention", *The AIDS Knowledge Database*, November 1998; UCSF Center for AIDS Prevention Studies, "What Are Latinos' HIV Prevention Needs?" Fact Sheet
- ¹¹ Klevens, RM, et al. (1999). "Trends in AIDS Among Hispanics in the United States, 1991-1996", *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 89, No. 7.
- ¹² Kaiser Family Foundation *National Survey of Latinos on HIV/AIDS*. Data from Sept/Oct 1997. National sample included respondents living in the continental US only (Puerto Rico, Alaska, and Hawaii were not included).