HIV In API Communities

National Data:
A recent analysis of HIV data covering 2010-2014 showed that the rate of HIV diagnoses of HIV infection for Asians increased during this period. Only Asians (5.5%) and American Indians/Alaska Natives experienced statistically significant growth among any racial or ethnic groups. During the same time period, the rate of HIV infection declined for all other racial and ethnic groups including Native Hawaiians/Other Pacific Islanders.¹

At the end of 2014, CDC estimates there were 12,370 Asian American and 881 Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders living with HIV in the U.S. and 6 dependent areas. This analysis also showed that the rate of HIV diagnosis among Asian Americans has increased from 4.7 per 100,000 to 5.5 per 100,000 between 2010 and 2015. For Native Hawaiians/Other Pacific Islanders the rate increased from 11.0 per 100,000 to 14.1 per 100,000 over the same period.²

Deaths of Persons with Diagnosed HIV Infection by Race/Ethnicity, 2014—United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>6,888</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>2,525</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>4,722</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple races</td>
<td>867</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>15,119</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data from CDC: National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention, Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention.

66.5% of Asian Americans and 43.1% of Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders have never been tested for HIV. In fact, A&PIs have the lowest HIV testing rates of all races and ethnicities: 36.5% of Whites, 58.2% of Blacks or African Americans, 42.3% of American Indian or Alaska Natives, and 41.8% of Hispanic/Latinos report having been tested for HIV.³

Low testing rates and annual increases in HIV infections may mean that HIV infection rates are increasing for A&PIs. It is estimated that 1 in 5 A&PIs living with HIV don’t even know it. By comparison this is the highest among all racial or ethnic groups with about 13% of all persons living with HIV in the U.S. are undiagnosed.⁴ A lack of HIV testing in A&P communities may mask HIV/AIDS infection rates among A&PIs at the national level. In 2015, CDC estimates that 955 Asians and 79 Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders were diagnosed with HIV infection in the U.S. with confidential name-based HIV infection reporting.⁵

Data also suggests that when A&PIs do get tested, it is usually at a late stage in the disease’s progression. At the end of 2014, 24.6% of Asians diagnosed with HIV were given a Stage 3 (AIDS) diagnosis at the time of testing, second behind American Indian/Alaskan Natives.⁶

Asians diagnosed with HIV in 2013, 82% were linked to HIV medical care within 3 months of diagnosis. In comparison 70% of NHOPi were linked to care within 3 months. Asians who had been living with diagnosed HIV for at least a year at the end of 2012, 53% were retained in care (receiving continuous HIV medical care) and 54% had achieved viral suppression.⁷

Comparatively, 49% of NHOPi were retained in care and 47% had a suppressed viral load.⁸

Women

A&P women are often ignored when it comes to HIV prevention messaging and services, but they’re still at risk for HIV. In 2015, 13.87% of new HIV infections (132 females) among A&PI individuals occurred among Asian women. An overwhelming majority of A&PI women living with HIV were infected through transmission during heterosexual sex (93%).⁹

In fact, young A&PI women are the least likely of all races and ethnicities to get tested for HIV. In OB/GYN settings, A&PI women are less likely to be offered an HIV test than women of other ethnicities.¹⁰

Transgender Women & Men

CDC classifies transgender women as “men who have sex with men,” or “MSM,” making it very difficult to determine the extent of HIV infection among the trans community. It is unclear how data is collected for transgender men. Very little data exists on A&PI transgender women and men; most studies are with male to-female transgender residing in the Bay Area. In the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey Asian transgender individuals have the lowest rate (49%) of ever being tested for HIV out of all racial and ethnic groups. By comparison 55% of transgender individuals have been tested for HIV. 1.8% of Asian transgender women report living with HIV.¹¹ The majority of data underestimates the number of transgender persons affected by HIV due to the data collection methods.

Men

Men account for 86.13% of all HIV infections among all A&PIs. Men who have sex with men are by far the largest at-risk group among A&PI men. According to the 2014 National HIV Behavioral Health System Survey 75.7% of Asian MSM and 83.7% of Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander MSM were tested in the past 12 months.¹² From 2005 to 2014, HIV diagnoses among Asian gay and bisexual men in the United States increased 101%.¹³ During the same time period there was a 27% increase in HIV diagnoses among NHOPi gay and bisexual men.¹⁴ 89% of Asian cases and 90.79% of Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander cases were among men who have sex with men (MSM). Heterosexual transmission accounted only 8.73% of transmission for Asian men and 5.10% for Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders.¹⁵

References:

1 CDC’s HIV Surveillance Report: Diagnoses of HIV Infection in the United States and Dependent Areas, 2015; vol. 27.
2 Ibid (1).
5 Ibid (1).
7 https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/group/racialethnic/asians/index.html
8 https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/group/racialethnic/nhopi/index.html
9 Ibid (1).
13 Ibid (7).
14 Ibid (8).
15 Ibid (1).