

## Factsheet

### HIV and AIDS in Asia and the Pacific

Asia Pacific is a wide and varied region, containing more than half of the world's population. Throughout the region there has been mixed progress in reducing new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths with variations in HIV prevalence among key populations.

#### Epidemic at a glance

- The estimated number of people living with HIV in Asia and the Pacific is just under 5 million (4.883 million in 2011)
- 160,000 of these people are children younger than 15 years.
- Approximately 300,000 people died from AIDS-related causes in 2009. This figure has remained stable in recent years.
- HIV epidemics in Asia and the Pacific remain largely concentrated among people who inject drugs (PWID), men who have sex with men (MSM) and sex workers.
- Oceania, and South and South-East Asia have made progress in reducing new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths. In East Asia, new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths are increasing.

#### People living with HIV (all ages)

	People living with HIV in 2001	People living with HIV in 2012
Oceania	37,000	51,000
South and South-East Asia	3,700,000	3,900,000
East Asia	370,000	880,000

#### New HIV infections

	New HIV Infections in 2001	New HIV Infections in 2012
Oceania	4,300	2,100
South and South East Asia	400,000	270,000
East Asia	68,000	81,000

#### AIDS related deaths

	AIDS related deaths in 2005	AIDS related deaths in 2012
Oceania	2,300	1,200
South and South East Asia	290,000	220,000
East Asia	39,000	41,000

## **Varying Epidemics**

India, China, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Myanmar and Malaysia all have an estimated 100,000 or more people living with HIV

- Over 90% of people living with HIV in Asia and the Pacific live in these seven countries, with around half (49%) of them living in India alone.
- In the Pacific region, Papua New Guinea has the largest epidemic with around 34,000 people living with HIV in 2009.
- Controlling the epidemics in the most affected countries is essential if the regional epidemic is to be reversed.

Progress has been made in Cambodia, India, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Papua New Guinea and Thailand where the rate of new HIV infections fell by more than 25% between 2001 and 2011.

However, in Bangladesh, Indonesia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka, the rate of new HIV infections increased by more than 25% between 2001 and 2011.

## **Preventing mother to child transmission (PMTCT)**

In Asia and the Pacific, around 35% of people living with HIV are women.

Antiretroviral treatment for pregnant women to prevent mother to child transmission stood at 18% in South and South-East Asia, 26% in East Asia and 49% in Oceania in 2012. There are some successes; Malaysia and Thailand both have coverage greater than 80%.

An estimated 22,000 children under 15 years in Asia and the Pacific were newly infected with HIV in 2009 which represents a 15% drop from the 1999 estimate of 26,000.

AIDS-related deaths among children declined from 18,000 in 2004 to 15,000 in 2009, a decrease of 15%.

## **Key Affected Populations (KAPs)**

The rates of HIV infection in key affected populations varies widely across the region.

### **Men who have sex with men (MSM)**

Nineteen of the forty eight countries in the region criminalize male to male sex, and are often subjected to police abuses, extortion, harassment, assault, detention and human rights violations.

More than 15% of men who have sex with men have HIV in Vietnam, while 8% are infected in Indonesia; and less than 5% in Bangladesh, Philippines and Malaysia.

Infection levels in MSM is very high in many cities in Asia, with levels between 13% and 32% being found in many cities in China, India, Myanmar and Vietnam. In Bangkok infection levels

among MSM was 25% in 2009.

Manila and Cebu in the Philippines both have 5% HIV prevalence in MSM and there has been a doubling of HIV transmission between MSM in the country.

### **People Who Inject Drugs (PWID)**

According to 2012 UNGASS country progress reports, national HIV prevalence among people who inject drugs in Pakistan and Indonesia is more than 25% and 35% respectively; the reported HIV prevalence in Bangladesh among people who inject drugs was far lower, at less than 2%.

The Philippines has a rapidly growing epidemic, the HIV prevalence rate among IDUs increased from 0.6% to 53% in 2009–2011. In nearby Mandaue, 3.6% of people who inject drugs are HIV-positive.

Lack of supportive legislations and policies in most countries in the region impede progress in implementing harm reduction interventions.

In several countries it is prohibited to carry and/or provide needles, syringes, methadone and/or buprenorphine. Throughout the region imprisonment or detention in forced labour and compulsory centres are used as the main drug rehabilitation option. More than half the countries in Asia apply the death penalty for drug related offences, and four countries have applied the death sentence in the past years.

### **Sex Workers**

All countries of Asia and the Pacific criminalize sex work or certain activities associated with sex work. Criminalization increases vulnerability to HIV by fuelling stigma and discrimination, limiting access to HIV and sexual health services, condoms and harm reduction services, and adversely affecting the self-esteem of sex workers and their ability to make informed choices about their health.

The reported HIV prevalence in Papua New Guinea among sex workers is nearly 20% compared to a national HIV adult prevalence of about 1%.

In Myanmar, nearly 10% of sex workers are living with HIV compared to a national prevalence of approximately 0.5%.

### **Transgender people**

Most Asian countries do not have specific anti-discrimination laws relating to discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation or transgender status but transgender and gender non-conforming individuals are often victims of existing legal system due to lack of laws that recognize them. Across Asia-Pacific there are approximately 9-9.5 million transgender and gender non-conforming people and the regional HIV epidemic is strongly linked to stigma and prejudice, against these populations.

## **HIV related travel restrictions and criminalization of transmission**

While one country in the region completely bars the entry and stay of people living with HIV, one require that a person be able to show they are HIV negative to be allowed to stay for even short periods. Five countries deport individuals once their HIV-positive status is discovered.

Eight countries in the region have criminalized HIV transmission and exposure.

### **Treatment**

Coverage of antiretroviral therapy to people living with HIV in 2012 under the 2010 WHO guidelines:

- **>95 %** in Oceania
- **52%** in South and South East Asia
- **47%** in East Asia

Cambodia has 94% coverage and is one of eight countries worldwide that has achieved universal access under the 2010 WHO treatment guidelines criteria.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic, Papua New Guinea and Thailand have reached coverage levels higher than 50%.

### **Sources**

This material was prepared by the AIDS 2014 Communications Department using the following sources:

[UNAIDS Global Report 2013](#)

[UNAIDS regional Asia and the Pacific Fact Sheet 2012](#)

[Getting to Zero - HIV in Asia and the Pacific - UNAIDS 2011](#)

[State of World Population 2011 - UNFPA](#)

[Harm Reduction International \(HRI\) \(2013\) Asia Regional Overview](#)

[The Global Database on HIV related travel restrictions](#)

[GNP Plus Criminalisation in Asia Pacific](#)