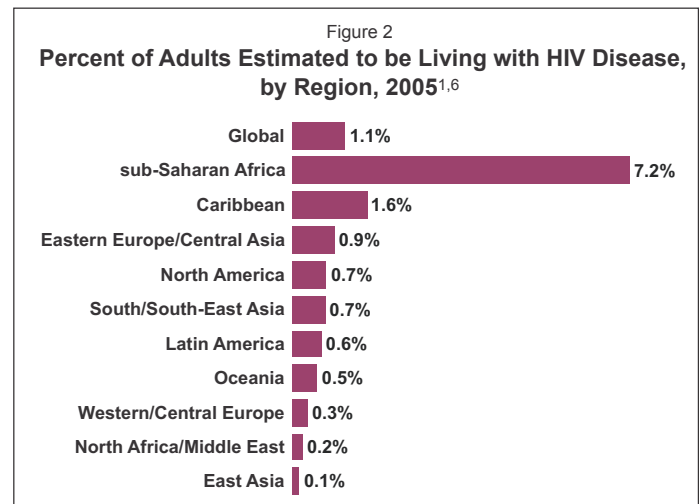
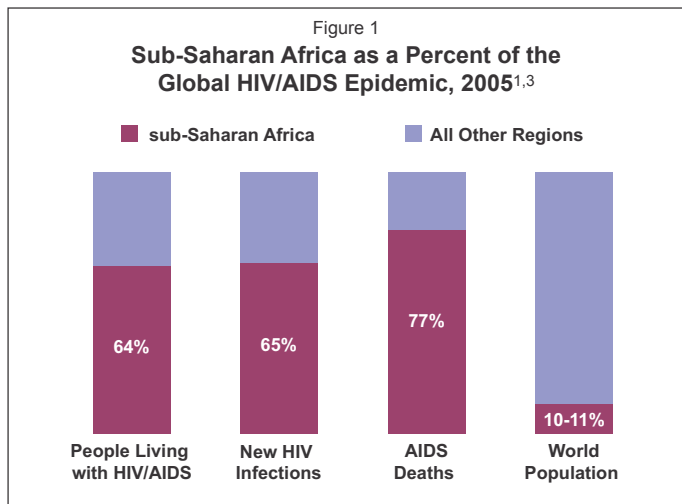


The HIV/AIDS Epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa

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The HIV/AIDS epidemic has had its most profound impact to date in sub-Saharan Africa. The majority of people living with HIV/AIDS (64%), new HIV infections (65%), and AIDS-related deaths (77%) have been in this region, which only accounts for 10%–11% of the world's population.^{1,2,3} Life expectancy gains over the past century have been halted and in some cases reversed in many of the hardest hit countries in sub-Saharan Africa, including Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe.⁴ South Africa has the highest number of people living with HIV/AIDS in the world. Swaziland has the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rate (percent of people living with HIV/AIDS), followed closely by Botswana, and almost all countries in sub-Saharan Africa have generalized epidemics; that is, their prevalence rates are greater than 1%.⁵ In six of these countries, more than 1 in 5 adults⁶ is already estimated to be HIV-positive.⁵ Women make up the majority of those living with HIV/AIDS in the region, and young people are at particular risk.^{1,4,5} The epidemic has already posed serious development challenges for the region and has affected communities, families, livelihoods, and numerous sectors of society.¹ Most countries in the region are low-income and heavily or moderately indebted, according to the World Bank,⁷ and other challenges some have faced include food insecurity, internal migration, and conflict. Yet the epidemic is quite diverse throughout sub-Saharan Africa and, despite these challenges, there have been success stories, with some countries experiencing stabilization and even reductions in HIV prevalence.⁴ Most have developed national responses to HIV/AIDS through National AIDS Commissions, legislation, programs, and services.^{8,9}



Overview

- The first case of what was later identified as AIDS was officially reported in Africa in 1982.^{10,11}
- As of the end of 2005, an estimated 25.8 million people were living with HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa, representing almost two thirds (64%) of the global total of people living with HIV/AIDS.¹
- The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in sub-Saharan Africa was the highest of any region in the world (7.2% as of the end of 2005), and significantly higher than the global prevalence rate (1.1%).¹
- Of the 4.9 million new HIV infections estimated to occur in 2005, 3.2 million (65%) were in sub-Saharan Africa. Also in that year, there was an estimated 2.4 million deaths due to AIDS among sub-Saharan Africans, or approximately three-quarters (77%) of all AIDS-related deaths worldwide.¹ HIV is the leading cause of death in Africa.¹²
- HIV is spread primarily through heterosexual sex in Africa, although transmission patterns vary across the region and within countries.⁴

Populations and Regions Affected

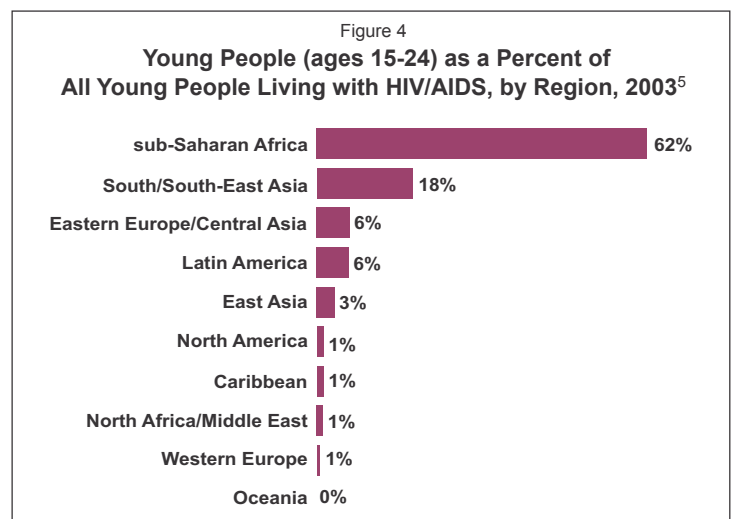
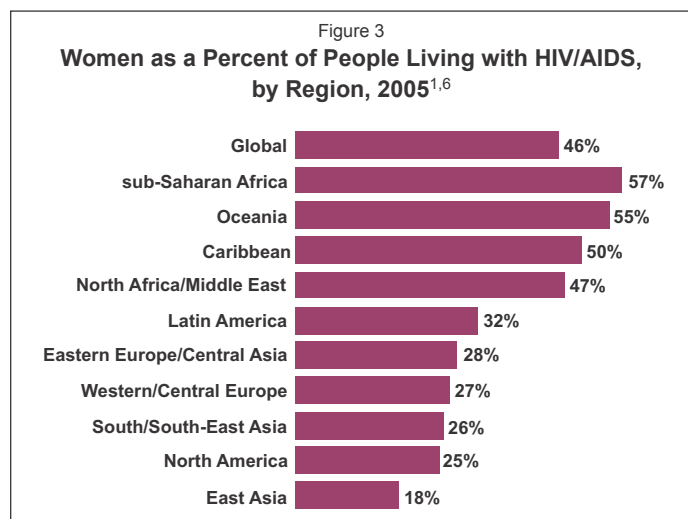
- The epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa is increasingly female. Women account for the majority of those estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS ages 15–49 in the region (57%).¹ The impact on women is even more pronounced in some countries within the region. In Kenya, for example, approximately two-thirds (65%) of all people living with HIV/AIDS are women; in Uganda, it is 60%.⁵
- Young people are at particular risk; 62% of the world's young people living with HIV/AIDS are in sub-Saharan Africa.¹³ Young women are especially vulnerable; young women and girls, ages 15–24, comprise 76% of all young people estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa; in some countries within the region, infection rates are up to 6 times higher among young women, compared to men.^{5,13} The impact on young people is exacerbated by the fact that the population of sub-Saharan Africa is quite young relative to other regions in the world, with 44% of the population below the age of 15 (compared to 29% globally).³
- Most children¹⁴ living with HIV/AIDS are in sub-Saharan Africa (1.9 million, or 86% of the global total, as of the end of 2004), as are most of the world's AIDS orphans (12.1 million or 81% of the total as of the end of 2003).^{5,15,16}
- The epidemic has had a varied impact across the region, with the most severe impact in Southern Africa.⁴

Other Key Data

- **Knowledge of HIV/AIDS:** Studies have found varied levels of general awareness of HIV/AIDS in African countries, as well as persistent examples of misconceptions and stigma.^{1,5}
- **Prevention:** Recent estimates indicate that sub-Saharan Africa faces a prevention funding gap and that few have access to needed prevention services.¹⁷
- **Access to Antiretroviral Therapy (ART):** Sub-Saharan Africa faces the greatest need for ART in the world.¹⁸ In sub-Saharan Africa, an estimated 11% of the 4.7 million people living with HIV/AIDS who need ART currently have access to this treatment. Of the 20 countries identified by the World Health Organization as having the greatest need for ART, 16 are in sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁸

International Support/Major Donors

- Numerous donor governments provide funding and other support to address HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa, both through regional and country-specific efforts. Sub-Saharan Africa is a major focus of the United States Government's President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), which provides most of its bilateral funding to 15 countries, 12 of which are in sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁹ U.S. bilateral aid for these 12 countries was \$694 million in FY2004; this amount is expected to increase to \$1.1 billion in FY2005.²⁰ The U.S. also provides funding for HIV/AIDS efforts around the world through its contributions to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (The Global Fund).
- The Global Fund has approved close to 60 HIV/AIDS grants (including HIV/TB grants) in 37 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, totaling more than \$1 billion in approved funding and representing 54% of all Global Fund grants approved in the region.²¹
- UNAIDS and its 10 co-sponsors support numerous HIV/AIDS programs, partnerships, and other activities throughout sub-Saharan Africa.^{9,22} One of the biggest such funding efforts is the World Bank's Multi-Country HIV/AIDS Program (MAP) for Africa, launched in 2000; to date, MAP has provided more than \$1 billion in grant funding to 28 African countries and 3 regional programs; additional projects are being prepared in another 10 countries and regionally.²³



Key Sources/Websites

- African Council of AIDS Service Organizations (Africaso): www.africaso.net
- Southern African Network of AIDS Service Organisations (SANASO): www.sanaso.org.zw
- Western Africa Network of AIDS Service Organizations (WANASO): www.wanaso.org/
- Southern Africa HIV/AIDS Information Dissemination Service (SAfAIDS): www.safaids.org.zw/index.cfm
- UNAIDS sub-Saharan Africa Regional Page: www.unaids.org/en/Regions_Countries/Regions/SubSaharanAfrica.asp
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- 22 UNAIDS: www.unaids.org.
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Prepared by Jennifer Kates and Alicia Carbaugh of the Kaiser Family Foundation. The Kaiser Family Foundation is a non-profit, private operating foundation dedicated to providing information and analysis on health care issues to policymakers, the media, the health care community, and the general public. The Foundation is not associated with Kaiser Permanente or Kaiser Industries.

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