

Surveillance of the HIV/AIDS Pandemic

The Pan American Health Organization began its AIDS Surveillance System in 1986, although cases had been reported to PAHO informally since 1983. The information is currently submitted to PAHO from 47 countries and territories of the Americas.

As of 10 June 1996 a cumulative total of 690 042 cases of AIDS had been reported in the Americas, of which 11 908 occurred in children under 15 years of age. A total of 406 488 cumulative deaths had been reported since 1986. Factors such as underdiagnosis, underreporting, and delayed reporting affect the completeness of the data. For example, in the latest report only 17 (36%) of the 47 reporting countries and territories had provided information updated to at least March 1996. PAHO and its member countries are working continuously to improve the quality and completeness of the information.

As of 30 June 1996, 1 393 649 cumulative AIDS cases in adults and children had been reported to WHO from 194 countries since the onset of the pandemic in the late 1970s and early 1980s. This represents a 19% increase over the cases reported through 30

June 1995. Allowing for underdiagnosis as well as incomplete and delayed reporting, and based on available data on HIV infection around the world, it is estimated that the cumulative total of AIDS cases is in fact over 7.7 million. The Region of the Americas accounts for some 13% of those cases (7% from the United States of America and 6% from the rest of the Region).

As of mid-1996, an estimated 25.5 million adults and 2.4 million children worldwide had been infected with HIV since the pandemic began, 21 million and 800 000 of whom, respectively, are still alive. In the Americas, approximately 3.1 million persons (adults and children) had been infected, of whom some 2.4 million are currently living with HIV infection.

PAHO produces a quarterly AIDS surveillance report which is distributed to all the countries in the Region, to other regions, and to the interested public. Twice a year, PAHO transmits the information to WHO headquarters in Geneva, where data are gathered from all regions and issued as a global report. Both "AIDS Surveillance in the Americas" and "The Current Global Situation of the HIV/AIDS Pandemic" are available by mail from the Regional Program on AIDS/STD, Pan American Health Organization, 525 Twenty-third Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037, or by fax through a service provided by the CDC National AIDS Clearinghouse (telephone 1-800-458-5231). The PAHO report is also available through the Internet at <http://www.paho.org/english/techinfo.htm>.

Sources: (1) Pan American Health Organization, Regional Program on AIDS/STD. AIDS surveillance in the Americas [quarterly report, 10 June 1996]. Washington, DC: PAHO; 1996. (Document PAHO/HCA/96.007). (2) World Health Organization and Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS. The current global situation of AIDS, 30 June 1996. Geneva: WHO; 1996.