

Caribbean

Latest epidemiological trends

- In 2008, an estimated 240 000 [220 000–260 000] people were living with HIV in the Caribbean region, while an estimated 20 000 [16 000–24 000] people were newly infected and some 12 000 [9300–14 000] died of AIDS-related illnesses.
- The Caribbean has been more heavily affected by HIV than any region outside sub-Saharan Africa and has the second highest level of adult HIV prevalence (1.0% [0.9–1.1%]).
- The Caribbean has a mix of generalized and concentrated epidemics. Women account for about half of all infections in the Caribbean. HIV prevalence is especially high among young women.
- In **Haiti**, HIV prevalence among pregnant women in 2006–2007 ranged from 0.8% in the western part of the country to 11.8% in one urban setting.
- The regional rate of new HIV infections seems to have stabilized, except for **Cuba**, where prevalence is low but appears to be on the rise.
- The **Dominican Republic** has experienced a decline in HIV prevalence due to changes in sexual behaviour, including increased condom use and partner reduction.
- Although **Haiti** has the highest HIV prevalence in the region, it has declined since the early 1990s.
- Treatment coverage in the region increased from 10% in 2004 to 51% by the end of 2008—higher than the global average for low- and middle-income countries (42%). Paediatric antiretroviral coverage in the Caribbean was also higher (55%) in December 2008 than the global treatment coverage level for children (38%).

Key regional dynamics

- Heterosexual transmission, often tied to sex work, is the main driver of HIV transmission in the region.
- Surveys throughout the region have indicated high HIV infection rates among sex workers—27% in **Guyana** and 9% in **Jamaica** in 2005.
- Emerging evidence indicates that substantial transmission is also occurring among men who have sex with men.
- A 2006 study in Trinidad and Tobago found that 20.4% of men who have sex with men surveyed were infected with HIV. In Jamaica, another study found HIV prevalence of 31%. Sex between men also seems to be driving an increase in HIV prevalence in Cuba.
- Although injecting drug use plays a small role in the epidemic in the Caribbean, it is the main mode of transmission in Puerto Rico, accounting for 40% of new HIV infections among men in 2006 and for 27% of new infections among women.