

Latinos and HIV/AIDS

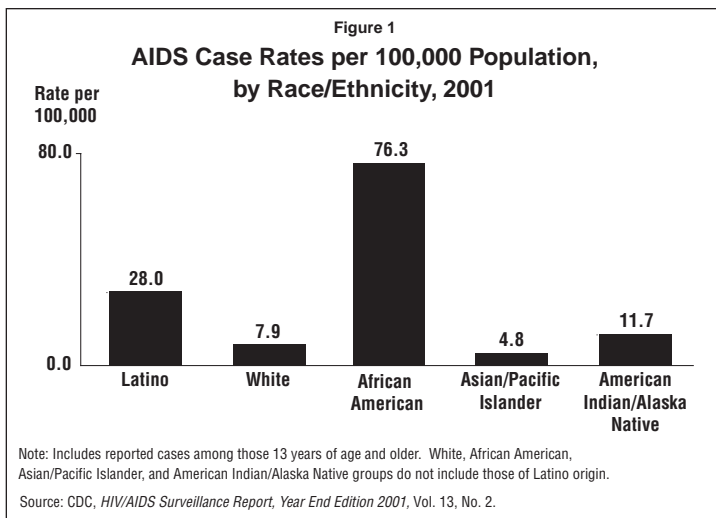
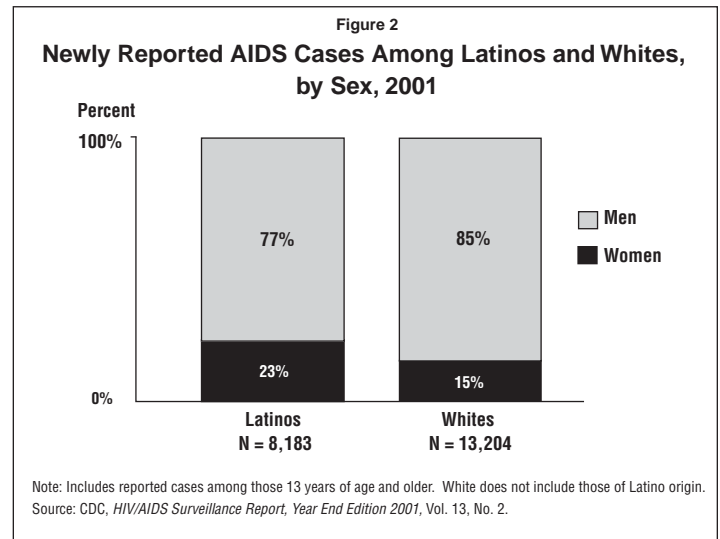
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Latinos in the United States have been disproportionately affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. They account for a greater proportion of new HIV infections and AIDS cases than their representation in the U.S. population overall. In addition, HIV remains one of the leading causes of death for Latinos between the ages of 25 and 44. The epidemic has also had a disproportionate impact on different subgroups of Latinos including women and teens, and the impact of HIV/AIDS among Latinos varies across the country and by place of birth. Moreover, studies have shown that Latinos with HIV/AIDS may face additional barriers to accessing care than their white counterparts.¹

Snapshot of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic

- Although Latinos represent approximately 14% of the U.S. population, they account for 18% of 816,149 AIDS cases reported since the beginning of the epidemic and 19% of 43,158 cases reported in 2001 alone.^{2,3}
- Latinos also account for 19% of the 40,000 new HIV infections estimated to occur in the U.S. each year.⁴
- As of the end of 2001, there were 71,294 Latinos estimated to be living with AIDS, or one-fifth of all people estimated to be living with AIDS in the U.S.⁵
- HIV was the 4th leading cause of death for Latinos ages 25–44 in 2000, compared to the 5th leading cause of death for whites and 1st for African Americans in this age group.⁶
- In 2001, the AIDS case rate among Latino adults/adolescents was more than 3 times higher than among whites (28.0 per 100,000 compared to 7.9), but below that of African Americans.³

- Although Latino men still account for most new AIDS cases and HIV infections among Latinos, Latinas account for a growing share. In 1991, Latinas represented 15% of new AIDS cases reported among all Latinos in that year; by 2001, Latinas represented almost one-quarter (23%) of new cases reported among all Latinos.^{3,7}

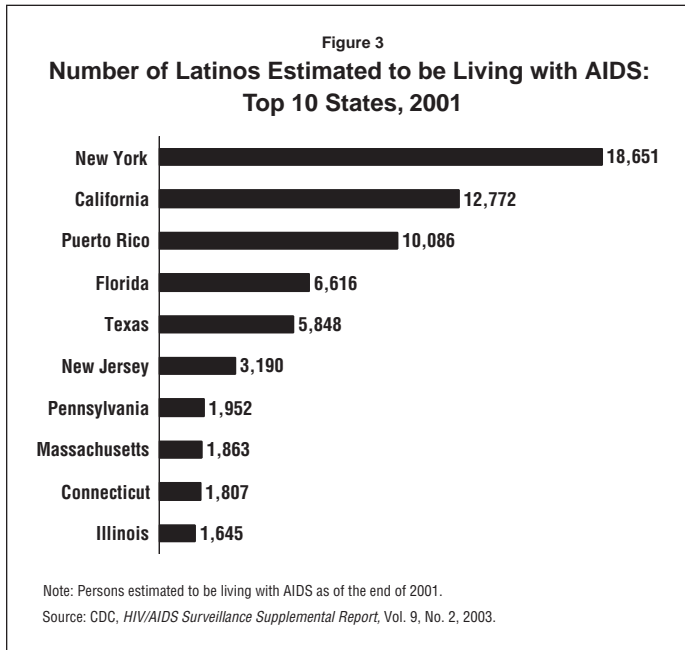


Key Trends and Current Cases

- The AIDS case rate for Latino men in 2001 was more than 3 times that of white men (43.3 per 100,000 compared to 13.7). Among women, the AIDS case rate for Latinas was more than 5 times the rate for white women (12.9 per 100,000 compared to 2.4).³

- While women represent a growing share of new AIDS cases overall, this trend is more pronounced within the Latino population. Latinas accounted for a greater proportion of newly reported AIDS cases among all Latinos in 2001 (23%) than white women did among all whites (15%).^{3,7} In 2001, Latinas are estimated to account for a greater number of new AIDS cases than white women.³
- HIV transmission patterns among Latino men vary from those of white men. Although both groups are most likely to be infected through sex with other men, 48% of Latino men are estimated to have been infected through sex with other men compared to 73% of white men; 29% of Latino men are estimated to have been infected through injection drug use, compared to 13% of white men; 16% of Latino men are estimated to have been infected through heterosexual contact compared to 5% of white men.^{3,8}
- HIV transmission patterns among Latinas and white women are similar, with both groups most likely to have been infected through heterosexual contact (65% of Latinas and 59% of white women). Thirty-two percent of Latinas and 38% of white women are estimated to have been infected through injection drug use.^{3,8}
- Although Latino teens (ages 13–19) represent only 15% of U.S. teenagers, they accounted for 21% of new AIDS cases reported for that age group in 2001.⁹
- The epidemic has also had a disproportionate impact on Latino men who have sex with men (MSM). In a recent study in 6 major U.S. cities, 14% of Latino MSM ages 23–29 were already infected with HIV, compared to 7% of white MSM.¹⁰

- AIDS cases among Latinos vary by place of birth. Latinos born in the U.S. accounted for 43% of AIDS cases reported among Latinos, followed by Latinos born in Puerto Rico (22%) and Mexico (14%). HIV transmission patterns among Latinos also vary by place of birth.³
- Although AIDS cases among Latinos have been reported in every state, the impact of the epidemic on Latinos is not uniformly distributed across the country. AIDS case rates per 100,000 among Latinos are highest in the eastern part of the U.S., particularly in the Northeast.¹¹



- Estimated AIDS prevalence among Latinos is clustered in a handful of states, with 10 states accounting for 90% of Latinos estimated to be living with AIDS. Ten metropolitan areas account for nearly 60% of Latinos estimated to be living with AIDS.⁵
- During the 1990s, important new advances were made in the treatment of HIV disease. These advances, coupled with prevention efforts, led to declines in the number of new AIDS cases and deaths among people with AIDS across all racial/ethnic groups. However, not all groups benefited at the same rate:
 - AIDS cases among Latinos declined by 56% between 1993 and 2001, compared to a 73% decline among whites.³
 - Estimated deaths among Latinos with AIDS declined by 63% between 1993 and 2001 compared to an 80% decline for whites.³
 - As with all racial/ethnic groups, the number of Latinos living with AIDS has increased largely due to treatment advances but also to the epidemic's increasing impact on minorities in the U.S. Estimated AIDS prevalence among Latinos increased by 130% between 1993 and 2001 compared to a 68% increase among whites.³

Testing and Care

- In 2000, 44% of Latinos reported ever having been tested for HIV, similar to the population overall.¹²
- Studies indicate, however, that Latinos may be more likely to be tested for HIV late in their illness—that is, to be diagnosed with AIDS at the time of their first HIV test or to develop AIDS within one year of testing positive—than others.^{13,14} For

- example, a CDC study in 25 states found that almost half (48%) of Latinos were tested late between 1994 and 1999, compared to 45% of whites and 38% of African Americans.¹³
- A recent CDC study in 16 sites found that Latinos and African Americans were more likely to be tested late than whites.¹⁴
- The HIV Cost and Services Utilization Study (HCSUS), a nationally representative study of people with HIV/AIDS in care in 1996, found that Latinos with HIV/AIDS were more likely to be publicly insured or uninsured than their white counterparts, with half relying on Medicaid compared to 32% of whites. About one-quarter of Latinos with HIV/AIDS (24%) were uninsured compared to 17% of whites. Latinos were also about half as likely to be privately insured than whites (23% compared to 44%).¹⁵
- The HCSUS study found that Latinos fared more poorly on several important measures of access and quality, differences that diminished over time but were not completely eliminated.¹⁶ In addition, HCSUS found that Latinos were more likely to report postponing medical care due to factors such as lack of transportation or being too sick to go to the doctor.¹⁷ Latinos were also more likely than whites to delay care after HIV diagnosis.¹⁸

The HIV/AIDS epidemic continues to exact a disproportionate toll on Latinos in the U.S. This is reflected in incidence, prevalence and mortality trends over time. Although Latinos still rank HIV/AIDS as the nation's number one health concern, the level of concern among Latinos and the general population has decreased over the past several years,¹⁹ presenting important challenges to policymakers, public health practitioners, and community leaders. As the largest and fastest growing ethnic minority group in the U.S., addressing the impact of HIV/AIDS in the Latino community takes on increased importance in efforts to improve the nation's health.

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