Chew the Stat

March 1, 2000

The United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) released new stats just in time for the yearly World AIDS Day media feeding frenzy. Chief among the worrisome, headline-making trends: More than 40 percent of new HIV infections in 1999 were women, and in Africa there are now six poz women for every five poz men. “Ten years ago, it was hard to make people listen when we were saying AIDS wasn’t just a man’s disease,” UNAIDS executive director Peter Piot said. “Today, we see evidence of the terrible burden women now carry in Africa’s epidemic.”

Some numbers:

- 5.6 million were infected in 1999 (of which more than 40 percent were women), bringing the number of total worldwide HIVers to 33.6 million.
- 2.6 million people died of AIDS in 1999.
- African girls age 15 to 19 are five to six times more likely to be poz than their male peers
- In Russia, nearly half of all reported infections since the beginning of the epidemic were recorded in the first six months of 1999.
- Brazil shelled out $300 million for antiretroviral treatment in 1999, but equivalent expenditures saved some $136 million in hospitalization costs in the two previous years.
- New methods for tracking infection rates in India allowed UNAIDS to downscale previous estimates by 800,000 HIVers—bringing the total number to about 4 million—still more than any other country.

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