Earthwatch

May 1, 2005 By Lucile Scott

*The **New York** Observer*, scooped the world in February, reporting that the UN Office of Drugs and Crime abandoned its international needle-exchange programs.

Brazil handed out a record 11 million rubbers during February's party-packed Carnival, reminding revelers that "condoms should be part of their outfit, no matter how little they wear."

On January 29, **Britain**'s former cultural minister and current Parliament member Chris Smith announced that he's been HIV positive for 17 years.

In January, **Russia** began providing free HIV meds to its 300,000 state-registered HIVers, having funded treatment for only 600 in 2004.

On February 23, **Cameroon** resumed a local prevention study of the HIV drug Viread. The study had been halted after ACT UP Paris said subjects—HIV negative sex workers—received insufficient prevention and legal info.

Japan reported in February that after years of slowing new HIV infections, new cases had doubled, to 1,114 in 2004, with possibly many more undetected.

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