What Are the Facts About HIV Rates in Haiti?

Fake news alert: Trump allegedly said 15,000 recent Haitian immigrants all have AIDS.

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Over the holidays, The New York Times reported that President Trump, while referencing the 15,000 Haitians sent to the United States earlier this year, said “all have AIDS.” The White House denied that he made the remarks, and the Times stands by its sources. Regardless of those details, what are the actual HIV rates in Haiti?

Using data from the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other international researchers, Newsweek examined the numbers regarding HIV in Haiti.

More than 10.8 million people live on the island, and last year saw about 7,900 new HIV cases, bringing the total number of adults living with the virus in Haiti to about 150,000, or 2 percent of the population.

Most people who test positive are sex workers (who have an 8.4 percent prevalence of HIV) and prisoners (4.3 percent prevalence).

Although these numbers are indeed high, the rate has fallen about 25 percent since the 2010 earthquake on the island that killed more than 230,000 people, Newsweek reports.

Trump’s alleged comments were made during a briefing about immigration in which he reportedly also insulted Nigerians.

As POZ has previously reported, Haiti played an important role in the spread of HIV in the early years of the epidemic, with the virus first arriving in the island nation before spreading to the United States and elsewhere from Africa.

For more insight into Trump’s comments and how they relate to racism and his immigration and AIDS policies, check out this Chicago Tribune article.

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