Kremlin Report Says Condoms Are Causing Russia's HIV Problem

Meanwhile, the country might lift its ban on HIV-positive foreigners.

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Russia's HIV epidemic can be blamed, in part, on an information war waged by the West, according to a report from the Russian Institute for Strategic Research (RISR). As The Moscow Times reports, a coauthor of the report said that condoms are one of the main factors.

"The contraceptive industry is interested in selling their products and encouraging under-aged people to engage in sex," said RISR's deputy director, Tatyana Guzenkova.

The findings were presented at an HIV-themed meeting of the Moscow duma. Last year, the Moscow-based Federal Center for Fighting AIDS said the country's HIV epidemic was a "catastrophe." In response, skeptical Moscow authorities asked RISR to investigate.

Guzenkova told a Russian newspaper that the Western model of fighting the epidemic is based on "neoliberal ideological content, insensitivity towards national sensitivities and over-focus of certain at-risk groups such as drug addicts and LGBT people." By contrast, she said, the Russian model "takes into account the cultural, historical, and psychological characteristics of the Russian population, and is based on a conservative ideology and traditional values."

Last year saw a record-high 93,000 HIV cases in the country, bringing the number of people reported to be living with HIV in Russia to 1 million.

In a related story, RT.com reports that the health minister for Russia, Veronika Skvortsova, said the country might lift its entry ban on HIV-positive foreigners.

Speaking last week while in New York for the 2016 United Nations High-Level Meeting on Ending AIDS, she noted that in 2015 Russia began allowing the entrance and residence of HIV-positive foreign nationals whose family members are Russian citizens. Skvortsova also highlighted the country's success at lowering mother-to-child transmission of the virus; 98 percent of the babies of HIV-positive mothers are born HIV negative.

For more about the U.N. meeting, click here, here and here.

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