HIV Prevalence Is Steady; Treatment Rate Is Low

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A new snapshot of the U.S. HIV epidemic has found that the number of Americans living with HIV has likely held steady in recent years, and that treatment rates are troublingly low among those living with the virus. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conducted an analysis of nearly 10,500 adults who responded to a national health survey between 2007 and 2012.

Comparing 1999 to 2006 survey results to the 2007 to 2012 data set, the researchers found that the proportion of 18-to-49-year-olds living with the virus had not changed over time.

During the 2007 to 2012 period, the majority of people living with HIV in the survey were black. African Americans had a prevalence rate of 1.6 percent, compared with 0.23 percent among all others. Men had a prevalence rate of 0.61, compared with 0.16 percent among women. Of the HIV-positive respondents, just 52 percent said they had taken ARVs in the last month.

Separate research has estimated that about 37 percent of HIV-positive Americans are taking antiretrovirals (ARVs) for HIV. This new CDC analysis does not necessarily conflict with or supersede that particular statistic.

“CDC has been working for many years to reduce the HIV disparity that exists within the African-American community,” says Eugene McCray, MD, director of the division of HIV/AIDS prevention at the CDC. “We are continuing to work, along with our partners, in pursuing a high-impact prevention approach that advances the goals of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy and maximizes highly effective HIV prevention methods.”

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