



HIV/AIDS Today

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Southeast Asia

This week's edition of HIV/AIDS Today reviews the impact of the epidemic in Southeast Asia.

THE STATE OF THE EPIDEMIC IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Southeast Asia includes Thailand, Burma, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and East Timor. The region includes countries with the highest HIV prevalence rates in Asia.¹

Thailand, Cambodia, and Burma have the highest rates of HIV/AIDS prevalence in the region, at 1.4% (2005), 0.9% (2006), and 1.3% (2005) respectively. There is evidence of declining prevalence rates, particularly in Thailand and Cambodia. In Indonesia and Vietnam, however, the prevalence rates continue to grow.

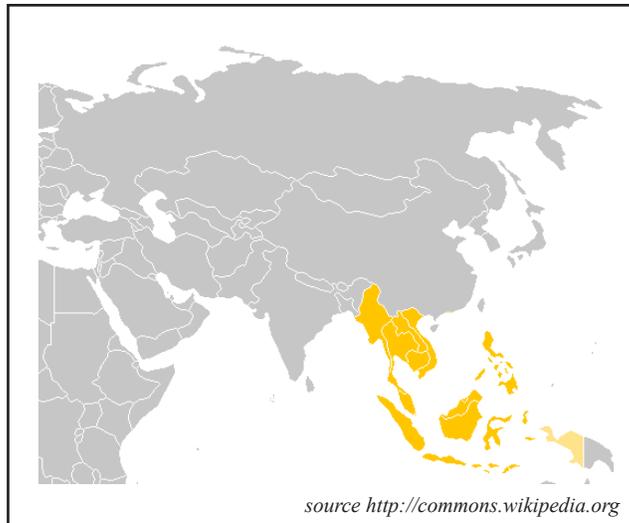
Twenty-eight percent of all infected individuals in Southeast Asia are women. In some countries, such as Cambodia, the rate is much higher. Between 1998 and 2003, the proportion of people living with HIV/AIDS who were women increased in Cambodia from 37% to 47%.

TRANSMISSION OF HIV/AIDS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

People involved in commercial sex work, injection drug users, and men who have sex with men are the

groups most at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS in Southeast Asia. Commercial sex work remains the most common mode of transmission in the region, with 48% of infections in 2005 related to commercial sex.

While the prevalence of HIV/AIDS among injection drug users in Southeast Asia was initially lower than in other parts of the developing world, it has reached high levels in recent years. The prevalence of HIV among injection drug users in Indonesia, for example, is over 40%. In Thailand, the prevalence among injection drugs users has ranged between 30%-50% over the past 15 years. And in Vietnam, the prevalence among injecting drug users increased from 9% in 1996 to



34% in 2005.

PREVENTION, CARE, AND TREATMENT

Throughout the continent of Asia, the number of people receiving antiretroviral treatment has tripled since 2003, but this only represents approximately 16% of those in need of treatment. Thailand leads both the region of Southeast Asia as well as the continent in providing treatment to at least 50% of those who need it.

ENDNOTES

¹ All information in this fact sheet is from the World Health Organization and Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), *AIDS Epidemic Update, December 2006* (2006) (online at http://data.unaids.org/pub/EpiReport/2006/2006_EpiUpdate_en.pdf); and World Health Organization and Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), *AIDS Epidemic Update, December 2007* (2007) (online at http://data.unaids.org/pub/EPISlides/2007/2007_epiupdate_en.pdf).