

AIDS in Asia and the Pacific



1 Nicholas Street, Suite 726 Ottawa ON K1N 7B7
Telephone: (613) 233-7440 • Fax: (613) 233-8361
E-mail: info@icad-cisd.com • Web: www.icad.cisd.com

The People Infected

As of the end of 2002, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Health Organization estimate that 7.2 million adults and children are living with HIV in Asia and the Pacific Islands. In 2002, over 490,000 people died of AIDS and there were just under one million new infections. About 2.1 million young people (aged 15-24) are living with HIV. With the exception of Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand, national HIV prevalence levels remain comparatively low in most countries in the region. However, many countries, including China and India, are experiencing serious localized epidemics that are affecting millions of people. High infection rates are being discovered among specific populations groups across the region (mainly injection drug users, sex workers and men who have sex with men).

Profile of the Epidemic

- **In China, official estimates put the number of people living with HIV at 1.0 million in mid-2002.** Unless effective interventions take hold quickly, this number is expected to hit 10 million by the end of the decade. Serious localized epidemics are occurring among injection drug users in nine provinces, as well as in the city of Beijing. There are also signs of heterosexually transmitted HIV epidemics in at least three provinces (Yunnan, Guangxi and Guangdong) where HIV prevalence in 2000 was as high as 11% among sex workers. One survey in rural Eastern China, where many people became infected when they sold their blood to collecting centres that ignored blood donation safety procedures, found HIV prevalence rates of 12.5% among blood donors.

- **The adult HIV prevalence rate in India is under 1%.** However, because of the size of the population, that still translated into an estimated 3.97 million Indians living with HIV at the end of 2001. Prevalence among women attending ante-natal clinics was over 1% in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Manipur, Nagaland and Tamil Nadu.
- **HIV prevalence rates among pregnant women in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, are 1%.** Among people in that city seeking treatment for other sexually transmitted infections, HIV prevalence was 7% in 2001, double the level of 2000.
- **Injection drug use offers the epidemic huge scope for growth.** More than 50% of injection drug users are HIV+ in parts of Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand and the state of Manipur in India. Injection drug use is a growing phenomenon in Indonesia, where 43,000 injection drug users are HIV+.
- **HIV prevalence levels of around 14% have been found among men who have sex with men in Cambodia, and among male sex workers in Thailand.**
- **Cambodia has reported stabilizing levels of infection and decreasing levels of high-risk behaviour.** HIV prevalence among pregnant women in major urban areas declined slightly from 3.2% in 1996 to 2.8% in 2002. Prevalence among sex workers declined from 42% in 1998 to 29% in 2002. The decline was most pronounced among sex workers under 20.

ICAD's aim is to lessen the impact of HIV/AIDS in resource-poor communities and countries. We are a coalition of Canadian international development organizations, AIDS service organizations and other interested organizations and individuals. Funding for this publication was provided by Health Canada. The views expressed herein are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Minister of Health. Most of the information in this fact sheet is taken from information released by the United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Health Organization for World AIDS Day 2002. Additional copies of this fact sheet are available on the ICAD website at www.icad-cisd.com. Le feuillet "Le sida en Asie et dans la région du Pacifique" est disponible en français.