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Summary of HIV Infection — Alaska, 1982–2013

From January 1, 1982 through December 31, 2013, 1,540 cases of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection were reported to the Alaska Section of Epidemiology (SOE; Table). Of the 1,540 reported cases, 555 (36%) were in persons who are known to have subsequently died. Of the 985 HIV-infected persons who are not known to have died, 574 (58%) are currently living in Alaska.

During 2013, 59 cases of HIV infection were reported to SOE (Table); one of these cases was in a person who is known to have died as of December 31, 2013. Of the 59 reported cases, 24 (41%) were initially diagnosed in Alaska, yielding a statewide incidence rate in 2013 of 3 cases per 100,000 persons. In contrast to previous years, in 2013, incident cases of HIV infection were most prevalent in non-white persons (representing 67% of new diagnoses). Of the 21 newly diagnosed persons who agreed to be interviewed, 15 (71%) reported that drug or alcohol use contributed to their high-risk behavior. Of the 11 men who were identified as men who have sex with men (MSM) and agreed to be interviewed, 10 (91%) reported online sex-seeking behaviors and 4 (36%) were co-infected with chlamydia, gonorrhea, or syphilis at the time of their HIV diagnosis.

Table. Summary of Reported Cases of HIV by Select Characteristics — Alaska, 1982–2013

	1982–2013				2013			
	All Reported Cases n=1,540		Reported Cases First Diagnosed in Alaska n=1,099		All Reported Cases n=59		Reported Cases First Diagnosed in Alaska n=24	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
HIV (non-AIDS)	367	120	237	92	34	3	13	2
HIV with AIDS	871	182	629	141	18	4	6	3
TOTAL # (%)	1,238 (80%)	302 (20%)	866 (79%)	233 (21%)	52 (88%)	7 (12%)	19 (79%)	5 (21%)
Age at Diagnosis in Years, # (% by column)*								
<14	11 (1%)	7 (2%)	8 (1%)	5 (2%)	1 (2%)	0	0	0
15–24	167 (13%)	61 (20%)	95 (11%)	41 (18%)	7 (13%)	1 (14%)	3 (16%)	0
25–34	472 (38%)	107 (35%)	315 (36%)	83 (36%)	25 (48%)	2 (29%)	8 (42%)	2 (40%)
35–44	391 (32%)	73 (24%)	282 (33%)	58 (25%)	9 (17%)	1 (14%)	3 (16%)	0
45–54	148 (12%)	43 (14%)	122 (14%)	36 (15%)	5 (10%)	0	2 (11%)	0
55–64	36 (3%)	9 (3%)	32 (4%)	8 (3%)	3 (6%)	3 (43%)	1 (5%)	3 (60%)
≥65	13 (1%)	2 (1%)	12 (1%)	2 (1%)	2 (4%)	0	2 (11%)	0
Race/Ethnicity, # (% by column)*								
American Indian/ Alaska Native	211 (17%)	102 (34%)	182 (21%)	97 (42%)	6 (12%)	1 (14%)	3 (16%)	1 (20%)
Asian	17 (1%)	15 (5%)	10 (1%)	10 (4%)	2 (4%)	2 (29%)	2 (11%)	1 (20%)
Black	144 (12%)	45 (15%)	92 (11%)	28 (12%)	8 (15%)	0	6 (32%)	0
Hispanic	104 (8%)	22 (7%)	70 (8%)	17 (7%)	7 (13%)	1 (14%)	1 (5%)	1 (20%)
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	8 (1%)	2 (1%)	7 (1%)	1 (<1%)	0	0	0	0
White	732 (59%)	111 (37%)	496 (57%)	77 (33%)	24 (46%)	3 (43%)	6 (32%)	2 (40%)
Multi-race	22 (2%)	5 (2%)	9 (1%)	3 (1%)	5 (10%)	0	1 (5%)	0
Transmission Category, # (% by column)*								
Male-to-Male Sex	759 (61%)	--	536 (62%)	--	29 (56%)	--	12 (63%)	--
Injection Drug Use (IDU)	131 (11%)	61 (20%)	92 (11%)	41 (18%)	5 (10%)	1 (14%)	1 (5%)	1 (20%)
Male-to-Male Sex and IDU	121 (10%)	--	62 (7%)	--	3 (6%)	--	1 (5%)	--
Heterosexual Contact	77 (6%)	204 (68%)	60 (7%)	161 (69%)	6 (12%)	6 (86%)	3 (16%)	4 (80%)
Perinatal	5 (<1%)	7 (2%)	3 (<1%)	5 (2%)	1 (2%)	0	0	0
Other or Not Specified	145 (12%)	30 (10%)	113 (13%)	26 (11%)	8 (15%)	0	2 (11%)	0
Residence at Time of Diagnosis, # (% by column)*								
Anchorage/Mat-Su	619 (50%)	149 (49%)	619 (72%)	149 (64%)	15 (29%)	3 (43%)	14 (74%)	3 (60%)
Gulf Coast	54 (4%)	12 (4%)	54 (6%)	12 (5%)	1 (2%)	0	1 (5%)	0
Interior	89 (7%)	30 (10%)	89 (10%)	30 (13%)	2 (4%)	2 (29%)	2 (11%)	2 (40%)
Northern	12 (1%)	8 (3%)	12 (1%)	8 (3%)	1 (2%)	0	1 (5%)	0
Southeast	54 (4%)	21 (7%)	54 (6%)	21 (9%)	0	0	0	0
Southwest	38 (3%)	13 (4%)	38 (4%)	13 (6%)	1 (2%)	0	1 (5%)	0
Out of State	372 (30%)	69 (23%)	0	0	32 (62%)	2 (29%)	0	0

*Category column percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Discussion

The fact that 38% of all persons newly diagnosed with HIV infection in 2013 were also diagnosed with AIDS that year underscores the importance of timely screening. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends routine screening for all persons aged 13–64 years and repeat screening in persons likely to be at increased risk for HIV infection, including injection-drug users and their sex and needle-sharing partners, persons who exchange sex for money or drugs, sex partners of HIV-infected persons, and MSM or heterosexual persons who have had more than one sex partner since their most recent HIV test. Routine screening facilitates earlier detection, which improves health outcomes and reduces the risk of HIV transmission. The Alaska HIV/STD Program offers linkage to medical care and partner notification services for all persons newly diagnosed with HIV infection; Program staff can be reached at 907-269-8000.

(Contributed by: Melissa H. Boyette, BA, and Jessica Harvill, MPH, Alaska Section of Epidemiology.)