



Substance Use Disorders and HIV/AIDS

Injection Drug Use

Injection drug use (IDU) that involves the sharing of contaminated needles is a major mode of HIV transmission. It is a factor beyond just the population of those who inject drugs. People who have sex with an injection drug user and children whose mothers are injection drug users or have sex with injection drug users are also at risk for HIV infection.

Across the Nation¹

- In 2006, there were an estimated 4,728 diagnosed HIV/AIDS cases linked to injection drug use (13% of cases), and an additional estimated 1,180 HIV/AIDS cases diagnosed linked to injection drug use or male-to-male sexual contact (3% of cases).²
- In 2006, there were an estimated 6,795 AIDS cases linked to injection drug use (18% of cases), and an additional estimated 1,803 AIDS cases linked to injection drug use or male-to-male sexual contact (5% of cases).³
- Since the epidemic began, 244,889 AIDS cases have been linked to injection drug use (25% of cases), and an additional estimated 68,516 AIDS cases have been linked to injection drug use or male-to-male sexual contact (7% of cases).⁴
- In 2000, IDU-associated AIDS cases among racial and ethnic minorities accounted for a greater portion of total cases than among Whites – 26% of African-American cases and 31% of Hispanic cases, compared to just 19% of White cases.⁵
- Almost 15% of AIDS cases reported in 2000 that were associated with injection drug use were among children and sex partners of injection drug users.⁶
- An estimated 57% of all AIDS cases among women that were diagnosed between the beginning of the epidemic and 2000 are attributed to injection drug use or sex with injection drug users, compared to 31% of cases among men.⁷

In Illinois

- Between 1999 and 2007, an estimated 1,649 HIV cases have been linked to injection drug use (13% of cases), and an additional estimated 530 HIV cases have been linked to injection drug use or male-to-male sexual contact (4% of cases).⁸
- In 2005, there were an estimated 162 AIDS cases linked to injection drug use (12% of cases), and an additional 37 AIDS cases linked to injection drug use or male-to-male sexual contact (3% of cases).⁹
- As a mode of transmission responsible for AIDS cases, injection drug use has declined from 32% of diagnosed AIDS cases in 1995 to 12% in 2005.¹⁰
- Between 1981 and 2007, an estimated 5,834 AIDS cases have been linked to injection drug use (20% of cases), and an additional estimated 2,266 AIDS cases have been linked to injection drug use or male-to-male sexual contact (8% of cases).¹¹

In Chicago¹²

- In 2005, there were an estimated 120 HIV cases linked to injection drug use (11% of cases), and an additional 37 HIV cases linked to injection drug use or male-to-male sexual contact (3% of cases).
- Injection drug use has declined as a mode of transmission from being responsible for 19% of HIV cases in 2001 to 11% in 2005.
- In 2005, there were an estimated 143 AIDS cases linked to injection drug use (16% of cases), and an additional 37 AIDS cases linked to injection drug use or male-to-male sexual contact (4% of cases).
- As a mode of transmission responsible for AIDS cases, injection drug use has declined from 33% of diagnosed AIDS cases in 1995 to 16% in 2005.
- As a mode of transmission responsible for HIV cases, injection drug use has declined from 19% of cases in 2001 to 11% of cases in 2005.

Non-Injection Drug Use and Sexual Transmission

Non-injection drug use also contributes to HIV transmission. Drugs impair judgment, leading individuals to engage in increased risky behaviors. People may also be more likely to trade sex for drugs or money to support their addiction.

- A study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that among young adults in 3 inner-city areas, those who smoked crack cocaine were 3 times more likely to be HIV-positive than non-users.¹³
- Several studies have shown that methamphetamine use is associated with increased HIV risk. Among men who have sex with men, methamphetamine users are 5 times more likely to become HIV positive than non-users.¹⁴

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC]. (2008). HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report, 2006. Vol. 18. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved June 12, 2008, from <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/basic.htm>.

² Includes AIDS cases among adults and adolescents by transmission category in the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

³ Includes AIDS cases among adults and adolescents by transmission category in the 33 states with confidential name-based HIV infection reporting.

⁴ Includes AIDS cases among adults and adolescents by transmission category in the 33 states with confidential name-based HIV infection reporting.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ CDC. (2002). Drug-Associated HIV Transmission Continues in the United States. Fact Sheet. Retrieved June 12, 2008, from <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pubs/facts/idu.htm>.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Illinois Department of Public Health. (2007). Illinois HIV/AIDS/STD Monthly Surveillance Update. Springfield, Illinois. Retrieved June 12, 2008, from <http://www.idph.state.il.us/aids/stats.htm>.

⁹ Illinois Department of Public Health. (2006). AIDS Cases, 2004-05. Retrieved June 12, 2008, from <http://www.idph.state.il.us/aids/aidscht0405.htm>.

¹⁰ Ibid; Illinois Department of Public Health, 2007.

¹¹ Illinois Department of Public Health, 2007.

¹² Chicago Department of Public Health. (2006). STD/HIV/AIDS Chicago, Surveillance Report. Winter 2006. Chicago, Illinois.

¹³ CDC. (2002).

¹⁴ Plankey, M. W., Ostrow, D. G., Stall, R., Cox, C., Li, X., Peck, J. A., and Jacobson, L. P. (2007). The relation between methamphetamine and popper use and risk of HIV seroconversion in the Multicenter AIDS Cohort. *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome*, 2007;45(1):85-92.