

Study: Fewer HIV/AIDS cases in India

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The 2007 figures for the world's human immunodeficiency virus/AIDS epidemic include a significant reduction in the number of infected people in India.

The United Nations-World Health Organization global estimate of HIV/AIDS includes a major reduction of the estimate for India to 2.5 million people living with HIV/AIDS -- less than half of the previous official estimate of 5.7 million people.

Officials said the revision is based on new population-based data from India's National Family Health Survey.

Professor Lalit Dandona, senior director of The George Institute India, said the new data support similar studies in southern India. He said the previously used official method for estimating HIV infection was invalid, producing a two to five times higher estimate than what was actually the case.

"We can now see the official method for annual estimation of HIV prevalence in India needs revision," Dandona said. "The new figures show the projected number of people needing HIV treatment over the next decade, and the associated resources needed, will be less than previously anticipated."

Dandona explained the basis for the lower estimate and its implications for planning of HIV/AIDS control in India in a commentary in this week's issue of *The Lancet*.

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