

China expects 48,000 new HIV cases this year

November 30 2011

(AP) -- China will have about 780,000 people infected with the AIDS virus by the end of this year, state media reported Wednesday, with most having contracted it through heterosexual sex.

The official [Xinhua News Agency](#) said that a report from the Ministry of Health and the United Nations estimates there will be about 48,000 new HIV infections in China this year. Xinhua quoted the report as saying the virus remains "mildly prevalent" in China.

HIV gained a foothold in China largely because of unsanitary [blood plasma](#) buying schemes and tainted transfusions in hospitals. Health authorities say heterosexual sex has now overtaken drug abuse as the main channel of transmission.

After ignoring or demonizing people with AIDS for much of the 1980s and 1990s, China's authoritarian government has taken a more compassionate line on the disease and combating its spread in recent years. But people with AIDS still face difficulties in getting treatment and compensation, and authorities remain deeply suspicious of independent activists.

On Wednesday, a handful of relatives of HIV or AIDS patients who contracted the virus through tainted transfusions planned to protest in front of the Ministry of Finance in Beijing but abandoned the plan because of the tight security there.

Organizer Sun Ya said the group was demanding government

compensation. Sun's 15-year-old son contracted HIV from a tainted [blood transfusion](#) in 2002 at the Peking University Dental Hospital in Beijing.

Sun said he and others have tried to use the legal system to fight for compensation but courts have declined to take their cases, so they have resorted to sporadic protests in the capital.

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