

Rate of new HIV infections drops for first time among black women, CDC reports

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But gay and bisexual men, and minorities, still make up bulk of new cases.

(HealthDay)—For the first time, the rate of new HIV infections among black American women declined between 2008 and 2010, according to a report released Wednesday by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Experts are hopeful that the 21 percent decrease may be the start of a long-term trend.

"There is much to be encouraged about in these new findings—particularly in terms of overall stability of new HIV infections and a decrease in HIV infections among African-American women," said Dr. Jeffrey Parsons, distinguished professor in the department of psychology at Hunter College in New York City, and director of the

college's Center for HIV/AIDS Educational Studies and Training.

He believes the drop in new infections "is likely due to very targeted [behavioral intervention](#) programs for African-American women."

Despite this good news, black women still account for nearly two-thirds of new infections among American women, according to the CDC report.

Overall, the number of new infections among Americans has remained stable at about 50,000 per year over the last decade. In 2010, there were 47,500 new infections.

New infections among young gay and [bisexual men](#), aged 13 to 24, continued to rise sharply, increasing 22 percent between 2008 and 2010. The report also said that there were 4,800 new infections among young, black gay and bisexual men in 2010, which means they now account for more new infections than any other subgroup.

Gay and bisexual men, blacks and [Hispanics](#) continue to be hardest hit by the [HIV epidemic](#) in the United States, the report said.

While gay and bisexual men represent 2 percent of the population, they account for 63 percent of new HIV infections. The number of new infections among gay and bisexual men increased 12 percent between 2008 and 2010.

Parsons called the concentration of infections among young gay and bisexual men "alarming, but not very surprising."

He said that there's a lack of resources and outreach aimed at preventing new HIV infections in this group compared to other groups. "If we are going to change these rates of [HIV infection](#) among young gay and

bisexual men, we need more resources to develop new strategies to engage these young men in HIV prevention efforts, and we need to address the societal issues that continue to disproportionately [affect] them," Parsons said.

"As a country, we are still often afraid to provide developmentally appropriate sex education to young people, despite significant scientific findings that show education about sex does not lead to increases in sexual behavior among youth," Parsons said. "Young gay and bisexual men typically get no targeted sex education messages in the school systems, and may not actually receive the kind of education they need until long after they leave school—at which point it might very well be too late."

Other minorities are disproportionately affected, as well. For example, the CDC report found that while blacks represent 14 percent of the population, they account for 44 percent of new HIV infections. Likewise, Hispanics represent 16 percent of the population and account for 21 percent of new HIV infections. The number of new infections among blacks and Hispanics remained stable between 2008 and 2010, the CDC said.

The report noted that the overall annual number of new HIV infections has remained stable despite continued increases in the number of people living with HIV. This indicates that testing, treatment and prevention programs are having an impact. However, rates of new HIV infections are still too high.

The findings, published online Wednesday in the CDC's *HIV Supplemental Surveillance Report*, provide the most up-to-date picture of HIV rates in the United States.

More information: The New Mexico AIDS Education and Training

Center has fact sheets about [preventing HIV infection](#).

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