

One in 10 South Africans HIV positive

May 14 2013

One in ten South Africans is HIV positive but AIDS-related deaths are falling as ramped-up treatment begins to have an impact, the country's official statistics agency said Tuesday.

After years of dragging its heels on the [HIV/AIDS](#) crisis, since 2004 South Africa has developed the world's largest [HIV treatment](#) programme.

New data indicate that drive is working. The disease will be responsible for 32 percent of all deaths this year.

While still high, that is a dramatic fall from 48 percent in 2005.

"Medicine has advanced and people are living with HIV and AIDS," [statistician](#)-general Pali Lehohla told AFP, unveiling data that point to a dramatic drop in AIDS-related deaths.

[Average life expectancy](#) has also increased to 59.6 years, from just 51.6 in 2005.

But the scale of the problem is huge, with 5.3 million people living with HIV out of a population of nearly 53 million.

The state had 1.9 million people on treatment in April this year.

Statistics South Africa released its last mid-year estimates, which uses modelled figures, in 2011.

The country's population growth rate is just over one percent.

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Citation: One in 10 South Africans HIV positive (2013, May 14) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-05-south-africans-hiv-positive.html>

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