

# Girl in China got HIV through blood transfusion: report

January 12 2015

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A five-year-old girl in China contracted HIV through a blood transfusion, state media reported, the latest case to shine a light on an issue that has long bedevilled the country.

According to the official news agency Xinhua, the girl, nicknamed Maomao, was infected during an operation for [congenital heart disease](#) in 2010 in the eastern province of Fujian.

She tested positive for HIV last year after she had come down with a fever for 17 days, Xinhua said.

A Fujian government official told the news agency that one of eight donors whose [blood](#) was used during the operation was in a "window period" during which the virus was undetectable. The donor was later found to have HIV.

Nearly half a million people are living with HIV/AIDS in China, according to figures released last month by the National Health and Family Planning Commission.

In the 1990s, rural parts of China—particularly the central province of Henan—were hit by the country's most debilitating AIDS epidemic.

It stemmed from a tainted government-backed [blood donation](#) programme and infected tens of thousands of people, including entire villages.

Currently, sexual transmission accounts for more than 90 percent of infections, according to the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CCDCP).

But transmission through blood transfusions remains an issue.

Wu Zunyou, the head of the National Center for AIDS/STD Control and Prevention, told Monday's China Daily newspaper that about 10 people in China annually are infected with HIV through blood transfusions.

By contrast, the last two such cases in the US took place in 2008 and 2002, according to the UK-based charity AVERT.

Screening of donors' blood led to the detection of 2,237 cases of HIV/AIDS in the first 10 months of 2014, Wu told the China Daily.

In the Fujian case, an investigation found that "neither the hospital nor the blood centre had broken any law" as the donor was in the window period, Xinhua reported on Sunday, adding that negotiations on compensation were underway with the family.

The same donor's blood was also used for two other operations, and officials are trying to track down the patients, Xinhua said.

In an op-ed Monday, commentator Tie Yonggong wrote in the Beijing Times that "a child who becomes infected with AIDS due to a [blood transfusion](#) is not just a family's tragedy; it's a systematic risk to all of society".

"In addition to this child, there are others who also received blood from the same source," Tie wrote. "So, remedying the loopholes in the system is in the interests of the safety of many people."

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