

Annual HIV infection record for Europe in 2014

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Europe registered a record number of HIV infections in 2014, driven by cases in Russia and immigrants who acquired the virus after arrival, the EU and the World Health Organization said Thursday.

"Despite all the efforts to fight HIV, this year the European region has reached over 142,000 new HIV infections, the highest number ever. This is a serious concern," WHO regional director for Europe Zsuzsanna Jakab said in a report published by WHO and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control in Stockholm.

In 2013, there were 136,235 new infections and in 2014, the report listed 142,197 new cases, which represents a 4.4% annual increase.

Heterosexual transmission is responsible for the increase in Russia and eastern Europe, and transmission through drug injection remains substantial, the report said.

Russia accounted for 60 percent of all diagnoses. The 28 EU [countries](#) plus the three states in the European Economic Area (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) represented 21 percent, but the number of infections has declined in Western Europe.

In EU countries, sex between men was the most common mode of HIV transmission.

HIV diagnoses among men who have sex with men have been rising at

an "alarming rate", from 30 percent of cases diagnosed in 2005 to 42 percent in 2014, with increases in all but six EU/EEA countries, according to the report.

Two in three new HIV infections were among native-born Europeans, while foreign-born individuals, including [migrants](#), represented one-third of HIV diagnoses, the report said.

"When refugees and migrants are victims of social exclusion in receiving countries, they are at greater risk of HIV infection, and this may lead them to engage in risky behaviour, increasing their risk for infection. This risk is exacerbated by inadequate access to HIV services and fear of being stigmatized," Jakab said.

The number of HIV infections diagnosed in migrants arriving in Europe has declined sharply overall, and evidence showed that a significant proportion acquire HIV after reaching Europe, according to the report.

New diagnoses in migrants originating from outside of Europe decreased by 41 percent. The authors of the report noted a general decline in the number of people arriving from countries with generalised HIV epidemics.

But there was a 48 percent increase among European migrants, or people originating from a European country other than the country where they were diagnosed.

The [report](#) urged European countries to offer testing and treatment services to all migrants, irrespective of their legal status, stressing this was also the safest way to protect the resident population from HIV [infection](#).

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