

## Rapid HIV transmission seen in injection drug users in rural U.S.

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(HealthDay)—The U.S. prescription drug abuse epidemic has increased

the risk of HIV outbreaks in rural and suburban communities, where up to now the virus has posed little threat, according to a report published in the July 21 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

Needle-sharing among prescription drug addicts created an outbreak in rural Scott County, Ind. Public health officials report that HIV was diagnosed in 181 individuals there between November 2014 and November 2015.

More frequent needle-sharing was related to a higher risk, the study authors said, with the number of times a contact was named as a syringe-sharing partner significantly associated with risk of HIV infection (adjusted risk ratio for each time named, 1.9; P

"It was the largest outbreak that has occurred in the United States since the introduction of HIV treatment," lead author Philip Peters, M.D., a medical officer with the Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, told *HealthDay*. "This particular community is rural and also very poor, and there wasn't really any access to clean syringes," Peters continued. "If persons started to inject drugs, they didn't have many options other than to share syringes. That is probably a factor that caused such rapid transmission of HIV."

**More information:** [Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)

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