



Girls at Disproportionate Risk for HIV

But total HIV cases among girls have decreased.

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In 2022, nearly 98,000 girls ages 10 to 19 contracted HIV, according to UNICEF's latest Global Snapshot on Children with HIV and AIDS. That's 1,900 new infections every week. What's more, girls were more than twice as likely to test positive for HIV in 2022 compared with boys, according to a UNICEF news release.

But there's also reason for hope: Total HIV cases among girls ages 10 to 19 have decreased by half since 2010 (from 190,000 cases to 98,000).

Of the estimated 1.54 million children living with HIV younger than 15 years old throughout the world, 87% live in sub-Saharan Africa.

"It is unacceptable that adolescent girls, who should be planning their futures, continue to bear the heaviest burden of HIV infection," said Anurita Bains, UNICEF associate director of HIV and AIDS, in the news release. "We—the [United Nations], communities, governments and organizations—must eradicate the obstacles that make HIV a threat to their health and well-being. This includes ensuring the sexual and reproductive health and rights of adolescent girls and young women are met."

Last year, there were 270,000 new HIV cases among children and adolescents ages 0 to 19. The total number of young people living with HIV is now about 2.6 million, according to UNICEF.

Experts attribute the disproportionate rate of HIV among girls to gender inequalities worldwide that cause girls to feel disempowered to negotiate safer sex. Stigma, low income and lack of access to HIV prevention and sexual and reproductive health education programs also contribute to the high rates of HIV among girls.

What's more, across 54 countries, the report found that, on average, 59% of people had discriminatory attitudes toward people living with HIV, nearly six times higher than the 2025 global target (10%).

The report also found major gaps in basic HIV prevention and treatment services. For example, among adolescents ages 15 to 19 living with HIV, about 350,000 were not receiving antiretrovirals to suppress the virus in 2022. In addition, adolescent girls are less likely to be virally suppressed

and tend to have poorer adherence to treatment compared with adults living with HIV.

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