

Facts about... HIV/AIDS in women

Summary: Since 1999, women represent approximately 12% of HIV/AIDS cases diagnosed in King County; this proportion does not change over time. Women with HIV/AIDS tend to be younger than men, most acquire HIV through sexual contact with HIV-infected men, and women of color are disproportionately affected.

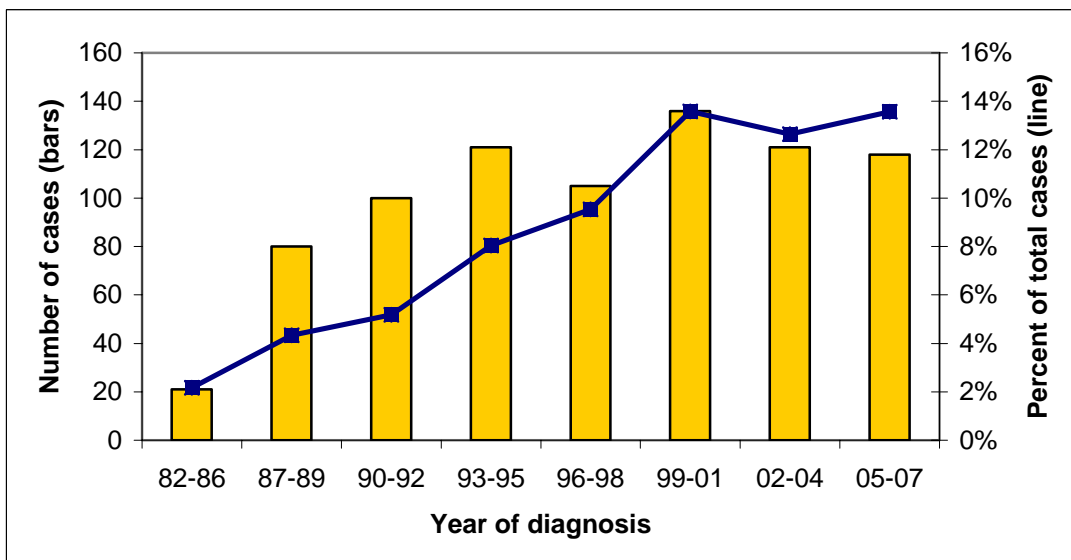
Population size:

- In 2006 there were 921,540 females in King County¹.
- The estimated number of King County women who are at-risk for HIV because they are drug injectors or sex partners of drug injectors is 9,000-15,000.
- The estimated number of HIV positive adult or adolescent women in King County is approximately 760. This estimate includes women who have not yet been diagnosed and a smaller number of women who have tested HIV positive but who have not been reported.

Status and trends in HIV/AIDS cases (Figure 1, Table 1 and 2):

- Women, defined as females ages 13 and over, represent 10% (611) of the total 6,283 King County residents reported living with HIV/AIDS as of June 2008.
- Fewer Washington HIV cases are among women than nationally. Women comprise 13% of cases in Washington (June 2008) compared with 26% of U.S. cases (at the end of 2006).
- The number of HIV/AIDS cases diagnosed annually in King County women is approximately the same each year. Diagnoses in women steadily increased through the 1990s; since 1999 about 40 women were diagnosed annually.
- The proportion of King County HIV/AIDS cases occurring in women has remained relatively stable since 1993 (Figure 1), fluctuating between 8% and 14% when grouped in 3-year periods.

Figure 1: Number & percent of HIV/AIDS cases in King County women (1982-2007)¹



¹Recent years not adjusted for reporting delay; case data reported as of 6/2008.

- In King County, women tend to be diagnosed with HIV at an earlier age than men--34% of King County women with HIV/AIDS were 20-29 years old at their diagnosis of HIV infection compared to 28% of men. Also, 5% of women were aged 13-19 at HIV diagnosis compared to 1% of men.
- The majority (67%) of women living with HIV/AIDS in King County acquired HIV through heterosexual contact, includes females who deny injection drug use but have had sexual intercourse with a man whose HIV status and HIV risk behaviors are unknown. Nineteen percent had a history of injection drug use, and 2% received a blood transfusion before 1985.
- In King County in recent years, the prevalence rate is substantially higher among black (16 times), Native American & Alaskan Natives (12 times) and Hispanic women (two times) than for white women. The rate is about half as high among Asian & Pacific Islander women.

Table 1: Prevalence rates per 100,000 by race among King County women living with HIV/AIDS (2008)¹

Race/ethnicity	Number of HIV/AIDS cases	Percent of cases in women	Rate per 100,000 women
White, non-Hispanic	228	36%	37
Black, non-Hispanic	301	48%	599
Hispanic	44	7%	84
Asian/Pacific Islander	23	4%	19
Native American/AK Native	25	4%	446

¹Cases diagnosed and reported through 6/30/2008 but not adjusted for reporting delay. Rates calculated from 2004 American Community Survey populations.

HIV prevalence:

- Based on the above estimate and a 2004 American Community Survey of 874,510 women age 13 and over in King County, we estimate that 0.1% of all adolescent and adult King County women are infected. The rate is higher among African American, Hispanic, and Native American women (see Table 1).
- HIV surveys in King County have been conducted to directly measure HIV prevalence (percent of people currently infected) among selected populations (Table 2). None of these surveys adequately measures the true prevalence of HIV among all women in King County.

Table 2: Surveys measuring HIV prevalence among King County women

Survey	Years	No. women tested	HIV prevalence
Drug Treatment Centers	1988-1999	3255	1.4%
Military Recruits (Washington state)	1985-2001	25303	<0.01%
STD Clinic	1988-2004	8926	0.3%
PH-SKC Counseling & Testing (excluding jails)	2005-2007	9924	0.4%
National HIV Behavioral Surveillance	2007	242	0.8%

- The prevalence of HIV among the 8,926 women tested for HIV in the unlinked (anonymous) STD Clinic survey has been less than one-half of one percent and has been stable over a 16-year study period from 1988 through 2004. Since these women were seeking care for a possible sexually-transmitted disease, women in this survey are considered to be higher risk of HIV than the general population of women.

Other measures of risk:

- Patterns of transmission of other sexually transmitted infections can indicate risk for HIV infection. Similar to HIV infection, both chlamydia and gonorrhea disproportionately affect black and Native American King County women relative to women of other races. According to the 2007 Public Health Sexually Transmitted Diseases Epidemiology Report, rates of chlamydia and gonorrhea among black women were seven and 14 times greater, respectively, than those of white women. Rates of Chlamydia and gonorrhea among Native American were five and eight times greater, respectively, than those of white women.

1. 2006 population estimates are from Washington Office of Financial Management.