

[Study sees differences in how U.S. Hispanics get HIV](#)

Fri Oct 12 13:37:18 UTC 2007

By Will Dunham

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - There are major differences among U.S. Hispanics in how they get infected with the AIDS virus depending on where they were born, officials said on Thursday, requiring more care in tailoring prevention efforts.

The trend was detailed in a report by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on HIV infection and AIDS among Hispanics, who make up 14 percent of America's population.

"In terms of the prevention messages, if you are looking at Hispanics, you can't look upon them as a monolithic group. You have to think about the various subcategories," Dr. Ken Dominguez, a CDC epidemiologist and one of the authors of the report, said in a telephone interview.

Infection through male-to-male sexual contact was more common among Hispanics born in South America (65 percent of HIV infection cases), Cuba (62 percent) and Mexico (54 percent) than among Hispanics born in the United States (46 percent), the CDC report said.

A greater proportion of Hispanics born in the Dominican Republic (47 percent) or Central America (45 percent) were infected through high-risk heterosexual sex compared with Hispanics born in the United States (28 percent).

Hispanics born in Puerto Rico had a greater proportion of human immunodeficiency virus infections due to injection drug use (33 percent) than those born in U.S. states (22 percent).

Immigrants born in Cuba, Mexico and Puerto Rico who were injection drug users reported less AIDS knowledge than U.S.-born injection drug users, the report said.

CULTURAL, SOCIOECONOMIC DIFFERENCES

The CDC said its findings were based on data provided by 33 of the 50 U.S. states in 2005.

"We're a very diverse community," Dennis deLeon, president of the New York-based Latino Commission on AIDS advocacy group, said in a telephone interview.

"We're diverse in how long we've been here (in the United States). We're diverse in our levels of education. We're diverse in our health literacy. And I think for too long the CDC has been treating Latinos as all the same," deLeon said.

The report attributed the findings in part to cultural and socioeconomic differences among Hispanic subgroups, including the stigma associated with homosexuality.

According to the CDC report, from 2001 to 2004, HIV infection diagnosis rates declined by 4.7 percent among Hispanic males and 13 percent among Hispanic females.

DeLeon questioned the finding about dropping infection rates because he said the report did not include data from some key states including heavily Hispanic California.

Overall, the mode of HIV infection for 61 percent of Hispanic males was male-to-male sexual contact, while 17 percent of infections occurred through heterosexual contact and 17 percent through injection drug use, the CDC said.

Among HIV-infected Hispanic women, 76 percent were exposed through heterosexual contact and 23 percent through injection drug use, the CDC said.

The report noted that Hispanics face disproportionate rates of HIV infections, with the second-highest infection rate among all U.S. racial and ethnic groups, behind blacks.

"The rate of HIV diagnosis for Hispanic males is about three times higher than the rate among white males. And for Hispanic females, it's about five times higher than among white females," Dominguez said.