

Health Disparities and Trends in HIV/STD

Many sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV, are disproportionately represented among different racial and ethnic groups. In other words, the numbers of cases of illness are high compared to the size of those groups in the population. This is known as a disparity. In North Carolina, there is ongoing concern about the disproportionately high rates of STDs among racial and ethnic minorities including African Americans or blacks, American Indians and Hispanics. For example, non-Hispanic blacks represent less than one-fourth of the state's population, but two-thirds to three-fourths of STDs reported are among blacks. Disparities in STD morbidity become evident when comparing the rate of STDs per 100,000 population for minorities to that in non-Hispanic whites. (It should be noted that race/ethnicity is merely a marker used to monitor disease trends in the population but is in no way a causative factor or indication of risk itself.) The reasons for these disparities are unclear, but may be “due, in part, to the fact African Americans are more likely to seek care in public clinics that report STDs more completely than private providers” and also to “the distribution of poverty, access to health care, health-seeking behaviors, the level of illicit drug use, and social networks with high STD prevalence” (*Tracking the Hidden Epidemics*, U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, 2000 <http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/>).

In 2003, 2,100 new individuals were reported with HIV disease (HIV/AIDS) in North Carolina. The overall infection rate for HIV was 25.2 per 100,000 persons. The state has seen fairly stable rates of HIV/AIDS over the past five years, with increases noted among African Americans/blacks and Hispanics. While the rate of HIV infection for non-Hispanic whites in 2003 was 9.6 per 100,000, the rate for American Indians (15.4 per 100,000) was over one and a half that for whites; the rate for Hispanics (25.4 per 100,000) was over two and a half times that for whites; and the rate for non-Hispanic blacks (76.6 per 100,000) was eight times greater than for whites. The largest disparity was found in comparing white and black females—the HIV infection rate for black females (51.9 per 100,000) was over 14 times higher than that for white non-Hispanic females (3.6 per 100,000). In 2001, HIV/AIDS was listed as the 7th leading cause of death for blacks overall, with the crude (or unadjusted) HIV death rate for blacks about 14 times higher than for whites.

Most reportable syphilis stages have seen a steady decline over the past five years, with the primary and secondary syphilis rate declining 67.7 percent from 1999 to 2003. The 2003 early syphilis (primary, secondary and early latent) rate for blacks (15.3 per 100,000) was 14 times greater than for whites (1.1 per 100,000), and the rate for American Indians (20.2 per 100,000) was over 18 times higher than for whites. The racial disparity of early syphilis among males has declined from 1999 to 2003 because minority rates are dropping faster than the rate for white non-Hispanic males. The opposite trend is true for females, where minority rates are dropping more slowly than the white rate, widening the disparity between females.

Gonorrhea rates decreased 29 percent among males and 22 percent among females from 1999 to 2003. In 1999, the rate for black males was 30.4 times the rate for white males. This disparity decreased to 26 times higher in 2003. Disparities among females have remained relatively steady, with the 2003 rate for black females (589.8 per 100,000) 12.6 times higher than the rate for white females (46.9 per 100,000). Although disparities among chlamydia case reports exist, determining their meaningfulness is difficult because screening practices vary. More information about HIV and STDs can be found in the “*North Carolina Epidemiologic Profile for 2005 HIV/STD Prevention & Care Planning*” at <http://www.epi.state.nc.us/epi/hiv/surveillance.html>.

STD/HIV Rates per 100,000 (Year 2003) of Minority Populations as Compared to White Non-Hispanics

African Americans

- ◆ HIV disease was eight times higher (76.6 : 9.6)
- ◆ Gonorrhea was over 17 times higher (673.8 : 38.4)
- ◆ Syphilis (early) was 14 times higher (15.3 : 1.1)
- ◆ Chlamydia was eight times higher (929.7 : 116.3)

American Indians

- ◆ HIV disease was almost twice as high (15.4 : 9.6)
- ◆ Gonorrhea was over four times higher (175.0 : 38.4)
- ◆ Syphilis (early) was over 18 times higher (20.0 : 1.1)
- ◆ Chlamydia was three times higher (341.4 : 116.3)

Hispanics

- ◆ HIV disease was almost three times higher (25.4 : 9.6)
- ◆ Gonorrhea was over twice as high (81.0 : 38.4)
- ◆ Syphilis (early) was over six times higher (7.2 : 1.1)
- ◆ Chlamydia was over three times higher (411.1 : 116.3)

Asians/Pacific Islanders

- ◆ HIV disease was one and a half times higher (14.0 : 9.6)
- ◆ Gonorrhea was slightly lower (34.2 : 38.4)
- ◆ Syphilis (early) was slightly higher (1.4 : 1.1)
- ◆ Chlamydia was slightly higher (120.7 : 116.3)

**North Carolina Chlamydia Reports (Lab-Confirmed)
Gender and Race/Ethnicity, 1999-2003**

Race/ Ethnicity	Year														
	1999			2000			2001			2002			2003		
	Cases	Pct	Rate*	Cases	Pct	Rate*	Cases	Pct	Rate*	Cases	Pct	Rate*	Cases	Pct	Rate*
Male															
White**	760	3%	27.4	738	3%	26.4	802	4%	28.4	1036	4%	36.4	1062	4%	37.3
Black**	2348	11%	288.2	2296	10%	277.4	2340	11%	278.1	2875	12%	336.2	2869	11%	335.5
Am. Ind./AN**	12	0%	25.1	31	0%	62.8	23	0%	45.9	41	0%	80.6	23	0%	45.2
Asian/PI**	21	0%	37.9	24	0%	39.1	26	0%	39.8	38	0%	54.6	20	0%	28.7
Hispanic	249	1%	127.5	291	1%	126.6	282	1%	115.7	350	1%	135.1	354	1%	136.6
Unknown	5	0%	-	1	0%	-	15	0%	-	8	0%	-	15	0%	-
Total	3395	16%	87.4	3381	15%	85.4	3488	16%	86.7	4348	18%	106.5	4343	17%	106.4
Female															
White**	4840	22%	166.9	4843	22%	166.0	4831	22%	164.1	5385	22%	181.6	5695	22%	192.1
Black**	12181	56%	1321.5	12315	56%	1318.3	12087	55%	1273.9	13209	53%	1373.3	14021	54%	1457.7
Am. Ind./AN**	295	1%	587.7	370	2%	715.5	226	1%	431.1	314	1%	591.0	332	1%	624.9
Asian/PI**	144	1%	240.8	151	1%	232.1	188	1%	271.7	167	1%	226.8	153	1%	207.8
Hispanic	906	4%	687.5	1110	5%	718.3	1285	6%	757.6	1274	5%	687.3	1473	6%	794.7
Unknown	50	0%	-	11	0%	-	72	0%	-	39	0%	-	48	0%	-
Total	18416	84%	453.3	18800	85%	456.1	18689	84%	446.7	20388	82%	481.0	21722	83%	512.5
Total															
Total															
White**	5600	26%	98.7	5581	25%	97.8	5633	25%	97.7	6421	26%	110.5	6757	26%	116.3
Black**	14529	67%	836.7	14611	66%	829.3	14427	65%	805.8	16085	65%	885.3	16891	65%	929.7
Am. Ind./AN**	307	1%	313.2	402	2%	397.8	249	1%	242.8	355	1%	341.4	355	1%	341.4
Asian/PI**	165	1%	143.2	175	1%	138.4	214	1%	159.0	205	1%	143.1	173	1%	120.7
Hispanic	1155	5%	353.2	1401	6%	364.6	1567	7%	379.0	1625	7%	365.6	1827	7%	411.1
Unknown	55	0%	-	12	0%	-	87	0%	-	47	0%	-	63	0%	-
Total	21811	100%	274.4	22182	100%	274.5	22177	100%	270.3	24738	100%	297.3	26066	100%	313.3

*per 100,000 population

**White= White, non Hispanic; Black= Black or African American, non Hispanic; Am. Ind./AN= American Indian/Alaskan Native, non Hispanic; Asian/PI= Asian/Pacific Islander, non Hispanic

**North Carolina Gonorrhea Reports
Gender and Race/Ethnicity, 1999-2003**

Race/ Ethnicity	Year															
	1999			2000			2001			2002			2003			
	Cases	Pct	Rate*	Cases	Pct	Rate*	Cases	Pct	Rate*	Cases	Pct	Rate*	Cases	Pct	Rate*	
Male																
White**	1002	5%	36.1	911	5%	32.6	811	5%	28.7	851	6%	29.9	844	6%	29.6	
Black**	8936	46%	1096.8	8094	45%	977.9	7642	46%	908.1	6695	44%	783.0	6569	44%	768.3	
Am. Ind./AN**	69	0%	144.3	67	0%	135.8	28	0%	55.8	63	0%	123.9	61	0%	119.9	
Asian/PI**	22	0%	39.7	20	0%	32.6	114	1%	174.4	24	0%	34.5	14	0%	20.1	
Hispanic	296	2%	151.6	349	2%	151.9	241	1%	98.8	191	1%	73.7	223	1%	86.1	
Unknown	14	0%	-	17	0%	-	21	0%	-	11	0%	-	8	0%	-	
Total	10339	53%	266.0	9458	53%	238.8	8857	53%	220.2	7835	51%	192.0	7719	51%	189.1	
Female																
White**	1664	9%	57.4	1521	8%	52.1	1335	8%	45.3	1292	8%	43.6	1390	9%	46.9	
Black**	7104	37%	770.7	6670	37%	714.0	6226	37%	656.2	5944	39%	618.0	5673	38%	589.8	
Am. Ind./AN**	148	1%	294.8	158	1%	305.5	77	0%	146.9	122	1%	229.6	121	1%	227.8	
Asian/PI**	27	0%	45.1	30	0%	46.1	109	1%	157.5	28	0%	38.0	35	0%	47.5	
Hispanic	119	1%	90.3	148	1%	95.8	115	1%	67.8	115	1%	62.0	137	1%	73.9	
Unknown	27	0%	-	12	0%	-	13	0%	-	13	0%	-	10	0%	-	
Total	9089	47%	223.7	8539	47%	207.1	7875	47%	188.2	7514	49%	177.3	7366	49%	173.8	
Total																
1999																
2000																
2001																
2002																
2003																
Total	19428	100%	244.4	17998	100%	222.7	16733	100%	203.9	15353	100%	184.5	15085	100%	181.3	
White**	2666	14%	47.0	2432	14%	42.6	2146	13%	37.2	2144	14%	36.9	2234	15%	38.4	
Black**	16040	83%	923.7	14765	82%	838.0	13869	83%	774.7	12642	82%	695.8	12242	81%	673.8	
Am. Ind./AN**	217	1%	221.4	225	1%	222.7	105	1%	102.4	185	1%	177.9	182	1%	175.0	
Asian/PI**	49	0%	42.5	50	0%	39.5	223	1%	165.7	52	0%	36.3	49	0%	34.2	
Hispanic	415	2%	126.9	497	3%	129.3	356	2%	86.1	306	2%	68.8	360	2%	81.0	
Unknown	41	0%	-	29	0%	-	34	0%	-	24	0%	-	18	0%	-	

*per 100,000 population

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**North Carolina Early Syphilis Reports (Primary, Secondary, Early Latent)
Gender and Race/Ethnicity, 1999-2003**

Race/ Ethnicity	Year														
	1999			2000			2001			2002			2003		
	Cases	Pct	Rate*	Cases	Pct	Rate*	Cases	Pct	Rate*	Cases	Pct	Rate*	Cases	Pct	Rate*
Male															
White**	72	6%	2.6	67	6%	2.4	65	7%	2.3	50	8%	1.8	41	10%	1.4
Black**	493	41%	60.5	417	38%	50.4	353	38%	41.9	254	41%	29.7	162	41%	18.9
Am. Ind./AN**	14	1%	29.3	17	2%	34.5	49	5%	97.7	15	2%	29.5	13	3%	25.6
Asian/PI**	3	0%	5.4	1	0%	1.6	1	0%	1.5	1	0%	1.4	0	0%	0.0
Hispanic	40	3%	20.5	49	4%	21.3	35	4%	14.4	22	4%	8.5	20	5%	7.7
Unknown	1	0%	-	0	0%	-	0	0%	-	0	0%	-	0	0%	-
Total	623	52%	16.0	551	50%	13.9	503	53%	12.5	342	56%	8.4	236	60%	5.8
Female															
White**	124	10%	4.3	122	11%	4.2	86	9%	2.9	36	6%	1.2	22	6%	0.7
Black**	401	33%	43.5	366	33%	39.2	289	31%	30.5	203	33%	21.1	116	29%	12.1
Am. Ind./AN**	35	3%	69.7	33	3%	63.8	48	5%	91.6	19	3%	35.8	8	2%	15.1
Asian/PI**	1	0%	1.7	1	0%	1.5	0	0%	0.0	0	0%	0.0	2	1%	2.7
Hispanic	19	2%	14.4	27	2%	17.5	15	2%	8.8	16	3%	8.6	12	3%	6.5
Unknown	1	0%	-	1	0%	-	0	0%	-	0	0%	-	0	0%	-
Total	581	48%	14.3	550	50%	13.3	438	47%	10.5	274	44%	6.5	160	40%	3.8
Total															
1999															
2000															
2001															
2002															
2003															
Total	196	16%	3.5	189	17%	3.3	151	16%	2.6	86	14%	1.5	63	16%	1.1
White**	894	74%	51.5	783	71%	44.4	642	68%	35.9	457	74%	25.2	278	70%	15.3
Black**	49	4%	50.0	50	5%	49.5	97	10%	94.6	34	6%	32.7	21	5%	20.2
Am. Ind./AN**	4	0%	3.5	2	0%	1.6	1	0%	0.7	1	0%	0.7	2	1%	1.4
Asian/PI**	59	5%	18.0	76	7%	19.8	50	5%	12.1	38	6%	8.5	32	8%	7.2
Hispanic	2	0%	-	1	0%	-	0	0%	-	0	0%	-	0	0%	-
Unknown	1204	100%	15.1	1101	100%	13.6	941	100%	11.5	616	100%	7.4	396	100%	4.8

*per 100,000 population

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**North Carolina HIV Disease Reports
Gender and Race/Ethnicity, 1999-2003**

Race/ Ethnicity	Year														
	1999			2000			2001			2002			2003		
	Cases	Pct	Rate*	Cases	Pct	Rate*	Cases	Pct	Rate*	Cases	Pct	Rate*	Cases	Pct	Rate*
Male															
White**	292	19%	10.5	246	17%	8.8	272	17%	9.6	334	20%	11.7	448	21%	15.7
Black**	691	45%	84.8	660	45%	79.7	755	47%	89.7	759	45%	88.8	892	42%	104.3
Am. Ind./AN**	10	1%	20.9	9	1%	18.2	11	1%	21.9	10	1%	19.7	11	1%	21.6
Asian/PI**	5	0%	9.0	3	0%	4.9	6	0%	9.2	8	0%	11.5	13	1%	18.7
Hispanic	37	2%	18.9	40	3%	17.4	50	3%	20.5	60	4%	23.2	79	4%	30.5
Unknown	0	0%	-	0	0%	-	1	0%	-	3	0%	-	4	0%	-
Total	1035	68%	26.6	958	66%	24.2	1095	69%	27.2	1174	69%	28.8	1447	69%	35.5
Female															
White**	84	5%	2.9	83	6%	2.8	82	5%	2.8	75	4%	2.5	108	5%	3.6
Black**	398	26%	43.2	400	28%	42.8	394	25%	41.5	418	25%	43.5	499	24%	51.9
Am. Ind./AN**	7	0%	13.9	3	0%	5.8	6	0%	11.4	4	0%	7.5	5	0%	9.4
Asian/PI**	1	0%	1.7	1	0%	1.5	4	0%	5.8	4	0%	5.4	7	0%	9.5
Hispanic	8	1%	6.1	9	1%	5.8	13	1%	7.7	30	2%	16.2	34	2%	18.3
Unknown	0	0%	-	0	0%	-	0	0%	-	0	0%	-	0	0%	-
Total	498	32%	12.3	496	34%	12.0	499	31%	11.9	531	31%	12.5	653	31%	15.4
Total															
Total															
White**	376	25%	6.6	329	23%	5.8	354	22%	6.1	409	24%	7.0	556	26%	9.6
Black**	1089	71%	62.7	1060	73%	60.2	1149	72%	64.2	1177	69%	64.8	1391	66%	76.6
Am. Ind./AN**	17	1%	17.3	12	1%	11.9	17	1%	16.6	14	1%	13.5	16	1%	15.4
Asian/PI**	6	0%	5.2	4	0%	3.2	10	1%	7.4	12	1%	8.4	20	1%	14.0
Hispanic	45	3%	13.8	49	3%	12.8	63	4%	15.2	90	5%	20.2	113	5%	25.4
Unknown	0	0%	-	0	0%	-	1	0%	-	3	0%	-	4	0%	-
Total	1533	100%	19.3	1454	100%	18.0	1594	100%	19.4	1705	100%	20.5	2100	100%	25.2

*per 100,000 population

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