



The Kaiser Family Foundation Survey of African Americans on HIV/AIDS

March 16-17, 1998

"The Untold Story: AIDS and Black American: A Briefing on the Crisis of AIDS among African Americans"

The HIV/AIDS epidemic has seriously challenged our Nation, calling into question many of our approaches to understanding disease—its prevention, treatment, and management. Part of the epidemic's significance has been its magnitude: over 600,000 AIDS cases have been reported, including almost 65,000 ¹ new cases, since June of 1996, and there are an estimated 650,000 to 900,000 individuals living with HIV in the US. ² Part of its significance has been its disparity: the HIV/AIDS epidemic is having an increasingly disproportionate impact on already disadvantaged populations, including African Americans. ³

The Epidemiology of HIV/AIDS

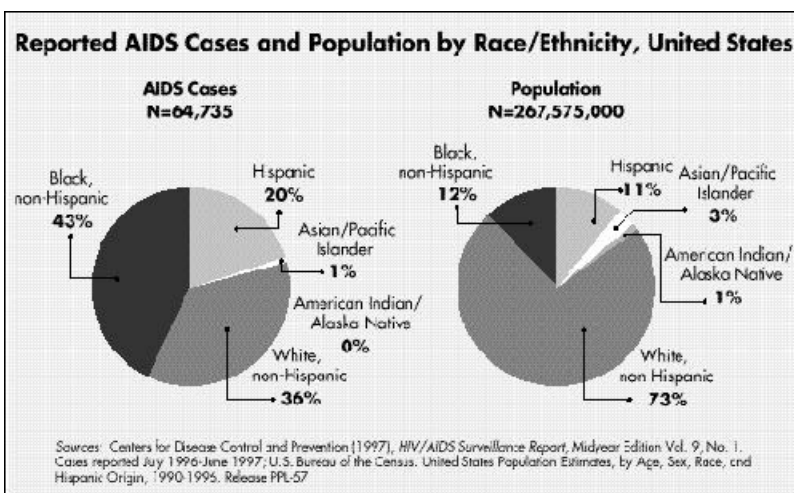
From the time of the first reports on what would later be defined as AIDS, African Americans have been disproportionately affected. In 1982, 23 percent of the initial cases were among African Americans who represented only 12 percent of the population. ⁴ / ⁵ This disparity has continued to grow. African Americans now represent 35 percent of all reported cases and 43 percent of new cases, even though African Americans comprise only 12 percent of the US population. ⁶ / ⁷

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The impact of AIDS on different subgroups of African

Americans has also been striking. African American men represent 39 percent of new cases among men and African American women represent 60 percent of new cases among women. AIDS case rates, the number of cases relative to population size, demonstrate further this disparity. The annual AIDS case rate among African American men is 6 times that of white men (186.3 compared to 32.5 per 100,000 population); the annual AIDS case rate among African American women is 16 times that of white women (61.9 compared to 3.8 per 100,000 population).⁸ Younger African Americans, including children, have also been disproportionately impacted. African American teenagers and young adults (ages 13-24) account for one third (35 percent) of reported AIDS cases in this age group. Almost two thirds (63 percent) of new pediatric cases are among African Americans.⁹

Among African American women, heterosexual contact is the most common mode of transmission, accounting for 38 percent of new cases. Heterosexual contact has surpassed injection drug use as the most common transmission route among African American women, although injection drug use is still significant (32 percent of new cases and half of all cases reported). Injection drug use also plays a substantial role in HIV transmission among African American men, more so than among men in general. Thirtyone percent of new AIDS cases among African American men are due to injection drug use, compared to 23 percent of all men and 11 percent of white men. Sex with men is also a significant transmission route accounting for 32 percent of new cases among African American men.¹⁰



The above trends in reported AIDS cases represent only the tip of the iceberg: if HIV infections, not just AIDS cases, are counted, the numbers are staggering. HIV disease progresses along a continuum from initial infection to a diagnosis of AIDS at an advanced stage of illness. Therefore, the number of individuals with HIV infection greatly exceeds reported AIDS cases. Trends in newly reported AIDS cases reflect more significant underlying patterns in the transmission and epidemiology of HIV.

The Health Gap And Access To Care

Recent treatment advances, particularly the increasing availability of effective drug therapies for AIDS-related opportunistic infections (OIs) and the introduction of new drugs which combat HIV (e.g., protease inhibitors), have positively impacted individuals infected with HIV. Treatment advances have led to some optimism about the future of the epidemic. For example, AIDS-related mortality appears to be dropping as many people are living longer with HIV. However, this drop has not been occurring at the same rate for all populations. Whereas the number of AIDS deaths in 1996 as compared to the previous year declined by 32 percent among whites, the decline was only 2 percent among African Americans. ¹¹

The differential impact of HIV/AIDS on African Americans should be considered within a broader context: there continues to be a health gap between African American and white Americans in general, as shown by the HIV epidemic as well as other health indicators. ¹²

These disparities in health outcome may reflect differential access to health care services. For example, the estimated AIDS-opportunistic- illness incidence among African Americans is greater than that among whites, although whites still account for more AIDS cases. ¹³

In fact, preliminary data from the nationally representative HIV Cost and Services Utilization Study (HCSUS) of people with HIV indicate that African Americans are significantly less likely to receive prophylaxis for *Pneumocystis Carinii* Pneumonia, an AIDS-related opportunistic infection which is preventable yet still accounts for a significant number of new AIDS diagnoses. ¹⁴

African Americans' Perceptions Of The HIV/AIDS Epidemic

Given the disproportionate impact of AIDS on African Americans, it is important to examine African American perceptions of the epidemic. What do African Americans think about HIV/AIDS? What are African Americans' attitudes toward and knowledge of the epidemic? Do these differ from the opinions and perceptions of Americans in general?

From the beginning, the AIDS epidemic has evolved in a climate of strong public opinion. Attitudes and perceptions have shaped not only national and local policy priorities (such as public health endeavors, federal spending decisions and the roles of various institutions) but also the experiences of individuals confronting HIV/AIDS in their own lives. These decisions and experiences, in turn, have shaped what Americans think about issues ranging from HIV/AIDS in particular to public health and disease prevention in general.

Research has been done over time to capture these public sentiments and to measure HIV/AIDS related knowledge and information among Americans overall, including the Kaiser Family Foundation Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS in 1995 and 1997. [15](#)

Surveys have sought to characterize personal perceptions and worry about HIV/AIDS; understanding of the transmission, course and treatment of HIV and AIDS; attitudes towards testing for HIV; impressions of community and government efforts in fighting the epidemic; and sources of information about HIV/AIDS. Researchers have tried to gauge the role of public opinion and knowledge in shaping the nation's response to the epidemic as well as the course of the epidemic itself.

Less well characterized is public opinion and knowledge among minority groups, whose views are often overshadowed in surveys of the population at large. Racial and ethnic minorities, for example, are usually sampled in proportion to their numbers with respect to the total American population. While these surveys provide important information about African Americans, they rarely have sample sizes sufficient for detailed analysis. The importance of understanding public opinion and knowledge in the African American community is underscored by the disproportionate impact of the epidemic on this population. Therefore, the Kaiser Family Foundation decided to survey a large sample of African American adults to examine their views and concerns about

HIV/AIDS today.

The Kaiser Family Foundation National Survey of African Americans on HIV/AIDS sheds light on the knowledge, values and beliefs of a large sample of African American adults with respect to HIV and AIDS in this country. It describes the perceptions and attitudes of African Americans, as well as subgroups within the African American community including women, young adults, parents, opinion leaders, and those with less education and lower incomes. The survey covers an important period in the fight against HIV/AIDS, especially for African Americans: the potential optimism offered by new drug treatments contrasts with the increasing impact of HIV/AIDS on African Americans. Our hope is that the findings from this survey might inform a better understanding of public knowledge and perspectives among African Americans on this important issue and contribute to more effective efforts of all those working to reduce the social, economic, and individual costs of the AIDS epidemic.

HIV/AIDS Is Seen By African Americans As An Urgent Health Problem Facing The Nation And Local Communities Today

There is a strong sense of urgency about AIDS among African Americans. Over half of African Americans rate AIDS as the most urgent health problem facing the nation today (52 percent), rating it well above cancer (36 percent), heart disease (13 percent) and problems related to health care costs and health care coverage (11 percent). By comparison, 38 percent of the national sample of all Americans 16 say that AIDS is the most urgent health problem today, tying it with cancer (also 38 percent) and ahead of heart disease (16 percent). The disparity in impressions may reflect reality; among African Americans, AIDS is a more acute health problem. Two in five new cases of AIDS among adults and one in three new pediatric cases are African American.

Three in five African Americans (58 percent) also see AIDS as a more urgent problem for the country today than just a few years ago. Although many African Americans believe that the country is making progress in addressing the problem of AIDS (45 percent), African Americans are more likely than all Americans to believe the country is losing ground (36 percent compared to 27 percent).

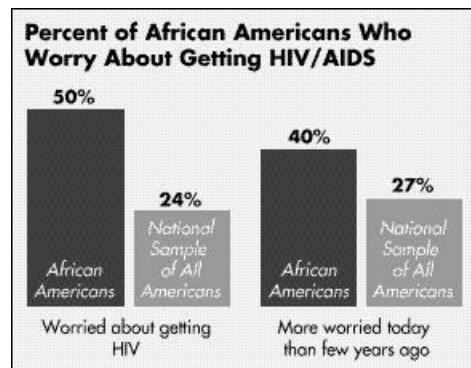
Many more African Americans also see AIDS as a problem

close to home and view AIDS with growing local concern. Forty-four percent say AIDS is a more urgent problem for their communities today than it was even a few years ago, (as compared to 25 percent of all Americans). Just 17 percent of African Americans say AIDS has never been a problem in their local community, (as compared to 25 percent of all Americans).

AIDS disproportionately touches not only African Americans' communities but also their individual lives. A majority (56 percent) says AIDS is a very serious problem for people they know and almost one in two (49 percent) knows someone who has AIDS, has died of AIDS, or has tested positive for HIV. In contrast, a third of all Americans (34 percent) says AIDS is very serious for people they know and a third (35 percent) reports knowing someone who has AIDS, has died of AIDS, or has tested positive for HIV.

African Americans Are Very Concerned About HIV/AIDS Personally, Both For Themselves And For Their Children

There is also a greater sense of personal worry about AIDS in the African American community, with one in two African Americans (50 percent) saying that they are very concerned about becoming infected

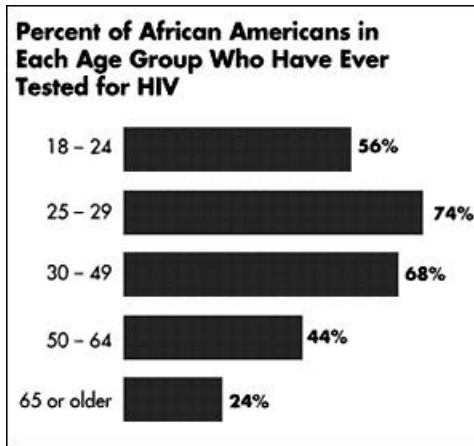


with HIV, a proportion twice that of all Americans (24 percent). African Americans also say their concern is growing: forty percent of African Americans report being more concerned about becoming infected with HIV today than they were a few years ago (27 percent of all Americans are more worried today). These findings may reflect the disproportionate rate of infection among African Americans: 43 percent of all new cases.

The heightened worry of African Americans may be reflected in the finding that fifty-six percent of those surveyed have been tested for HIV, including 35 percent in the last year. Among 18-29 year olds, two thirds have tested, one-third has not (by comparison, 51 percent of all Americans aged 18-29 have tested, 49 percent have not).

While the rate of HIV testing among African Americans is relatively high, there is misunderstanding among some about the appropriate timing of HIV tests. One in five African Americans (20 percent) incorrectly states that HIV tests can

accurately determine whether someone has been infected with HIV within one week or between one week and one month after possible exposure. Another 20 percent says they don't know when the tests could accurately determine whether or not someone has been infected with HIV.



Among African Americans who have not been tested for HIV, the reason given by most for not getting tested is that they are married or in a monogamous relationship (40 percent); a quarter (25 percent) says, "I'm not sexually active." Epidemiological trends also suggest strong reasons to be concerned about HIV infection among young African Americans. And, indeed, African Americans are particularly worried about their children. Two thirds (68 percent) of African American parents are very concerned about their children becoming infected with HIV, a concern they say has grown over the last few years.

The Role Of Individuals, Community Groups And Local, State And Federal Governments

<i>How do African Americans rate local or community groups in the fight against AIDS?</i>	<i>Rated as caring "a lot" about the fight against AIDS</i>	<i>Rated as doing "a lot" to help in the fight against AIDS</i>
Local health care providers (doctors, health clinics, hospitals)	61%	40%
Local public schools	49%	28%
Local church or religious leaders	54%	23%
<i>And governments?</i>		
Local government and political leaders	17%	14%
State government	20%	17%
Federal government	22%	18%

African Americans, like all Americans, have mixed feelings about the role played by local community groups in the fight against AIDS. About one in two African Americans feels that local public schools (49 percent) and local churches (54 percent) care "a lot" about the fight against AIDS; three in five (61 percent) say local health care providers care a lot. But "caring" doesn't always translate into "doing," according to African Americans. Only two in five (40 percent) see the health care community (doctors, health clinics and hospitals) actually doing "a lot" in the fight against AIDS. Fewer - about one quarter - think local public schools and community churches are actively helping a lot.

The perception among African Americans that nobody is doing a lot in the fight against AIDS is seen even more clearly in assessments of local, state and federal governments. Very few African Americans think that government (whether local, state or national) cares a lot or does a lot in the fight against AIDS. When rating how much government cares about the fight against AIDS, fewer than one in four African Americans give the three levels of government credit for caring a lot. And when assessing action, fewer than one in five says any government is doing a lot.

African Americans Expect More Personal Responsibility In The Fight Against AIDS But Are Not Punitive In Their Views

African Americans not only have high standards for action on the part of groups in society at large but also have high expectations for individuals in the fight against AIDS. Most feel strongly that individuals should take responsibility for safeguarding themselves from HIV infection, and for their situation, should they become infected.

Four in five African Americans (84 percent) agree that, by now, all adults should know how to protect themselves from HIV. Most say adults who become infected with HIV today should be held more personally responsible than those infected years ago (67 percent). However, most African Americans do not feel that accountability should extend to increased financial liability. Seventy percent disagrees with the suggestion that people who become infected today as opposed to a few years ago should have to pay more of their medical bills themselves. Similarly, the call for responsibility does not necessarily signify intolerance. Most African Americans (64 percent) say they would personally be very or somewhat comfortable working with someone who has HIV (as compared to 65 percent of all Americans).

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The Kaiser Family Foundation Survey of African Americans on HIV/AIDS
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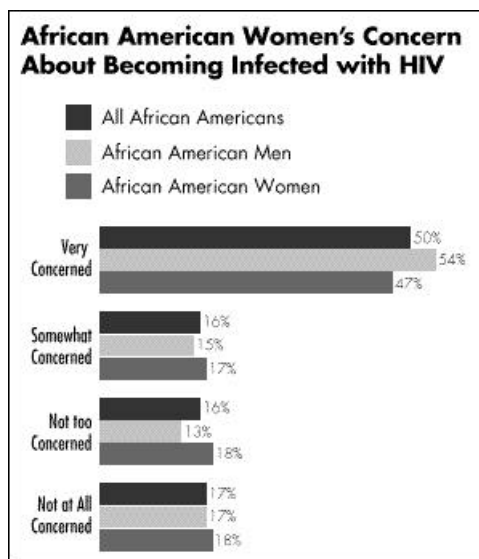
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African American Women and HIV/AIDS

African American women have been particularly impacted by HIV/AIDS. They represent the highest percentage (56 percent) of all AIDS cases reported among women and an increasing proportion of new cases (60 percent).¹⁷ This represents three times the number of new cases reported for white women. When standardized to population size, the disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS on African American women is even more striking: the AIDS case rate per 100,000 population for African American women is 16 times that of white women (61.9 cases per 100,000 compared to 3.8 cases per 100,000).¹⁸ While new cases among white women appear to be leveling off, new cases among African American women are still on the rise. African American women represent a little more than half of the survey sample (55 percent). Major findings are highlighted below:

African American women share a sense of urgency with African Americans in general about HIV/AIDS in the country today.

- African American women rate AIDS as the most urgent health problem facing the nation today (53 percent).
- In fact, they are more likely than men to say that AIDS is a more urgent problem for the country today



than it was a few years ago (62 percent compared to 53 percent).

- Most say that AIDS is a major threat to public health in this country today (88 percent).

In addition, African American women express this sense of urgency for their communities and people they know:

- Almost half (46 percent) say that AIDS is a more urgent problem today for their local community than it was a few years ago;
- A majority (55 percent) of African American women say that AIDS is a very serious problem for people they know; and
- Fifty percent knows someone personally who has AIDS, has died of AIDS, or has tested positive for HIV.

African American women are very concerned about their children becoming infected with HIV:

- Sixty nine percent of African American mothers are very concerned about their children becoming infected with HIV, and this concern has increased more among women (52 percent) than men (45 percent) in recent years.
- A majority of African American women (60 percent) cite the need for information about discussing AIDS prevention with children. This is the information which African American women rate the most important (36 percent).

However, African American women are less concerned about becoming infected with HIV themselves:

- Less than half (47 percent) are "very concerned" about becoming infected with HIV compared to 54 percent of men, although an additional 17 percent are "somewhat concerned" compared to an additional 15 percent of men.

A majority of African American women have been tested for HIV:

- Fifty-eight percent report ever having been tested,

including 36 percent within the past year.

- One third of African American women (34 percent) have talked with a provider about HIV testing. Of these women, 53 percent say they brought up the topic .
- Two thirds (69 percent) of African American women who have tested for HIV report discussing the results with a provider.
- However, one in five African American women (21 percent) incorrectly state that today's HIV tests can determine infection within one month of exposure and 21 percent state that they do not know when the tests can determine, with confidence, whether or not someone has been infected with HIV.

Why have 2 out of 5 African American women (40 percent) not been tested for HIV?

- A third (35 percent) say it is because they are married or in a monogamous relationship.
- A third (32 percent) say it is because they are not sexually active.
- Fourteen percent see no need or reason to suspect a problem.
- Only a third (35 percent) has ever talked with a health care provider about the risks of being infected with HIV.

Young Adult African Americans and HIV/AIDS

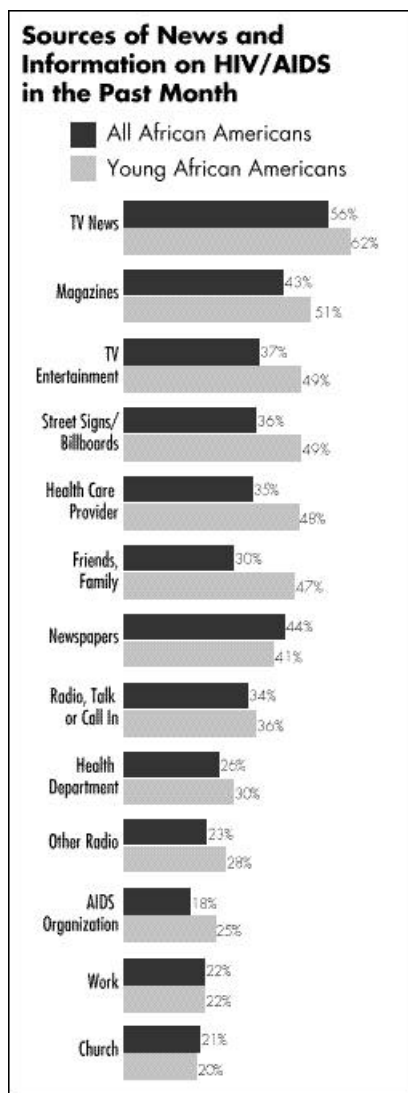
Despite some of the recent advances in HIV treatment, HIV infection is still increasing among young people and young people of color may even be at higher risk for HIV infection. One in every four Americans newly infected with HIV is under the age of 22. 19 Thirty-five percent of cases among 20-24 year old males and 55 percent of cases among 20-24 year old females are among African Americans. We know that young people engage in risky sexual and drug using behavior. For example, 53 percent of American high school students report having had sexual intercourse. Among African American students, 73 percent report ever having had sexual intercourse and more African American students than students in general report

current sexual activity.²⁰ What are young African Americans attitudes towards HIV/AIDS? What is their knowledge of HIV/AIDS and where do they get their information about HIV/AIDS? We defined young African Americans as those between the ages of 18-24 (we did not survey anyone younger than age 18). Young African Americans made up 16 percent of the sample. Highlights from our findings include:

Young African Americans have a greater sense of urgency and worry about the HIV/AIDS epidemic than African Americans overall.

- They are slightly more likely to say that AIDS is the most urgent health problem facing the nation today (57 compared to 52 percent of all African Americans).
- And they are much more likely to say that AIDS is a more urgent problem for the country today than it was a few years ago (70 compared to 58 percent) and in their communities (49 percent compared to 44 percent).
- To young people, AIDS is perceived as a major threat to public health in this country (93 percent).

Young African Americans' sense of personal concern about becoming infected with HIV is higher than African Americans overall.



- Young people are more likely to say they are very worried about becoming infected with HIV (62 percent compared to 50 percent of all African Americans).
- They report greater worry over the last few years. Over half says they are more worried about becoming infected (55 percent) compared to 40 percent of all African Americans.

Knowledge about HIV/AIDS among young people is similar to that of African Americans overall as are their information needs:

- More young people would like information about what to discuss with partners about sex (48 compared to 40 percent of all African Americans).
- Twenty-two percent would like information about using condoms.
- Forty-six percent would like information about getting tested for HIV.
- And half (51 percent) would like information about where to go for help if exposed to HIV.

Young African Americans rely on different sources for HIV/AIDS information than all African Americans:

- They are much more likely to have received information in the last month about HIV/AIDS from television, street signs/billboards, health care providers, or friends, family and acquaintances.

Young people are particularly supportive of TV programs including more information about HIV/AIDS:

- More young people are in support of major TV networks accepting advertising from condom manufacturers (89 percent compared to 74 percent) and including more condom references on TV shows which deal with sexual relationships (78 percent compared to 69 percent) than African Americans in general.

Have young African Americans been tested for HIV?

- Yes. As with African Americans overall, 56 percent

of young people have been tested for HIV, most in the last year.

- But 28 percent of young African Americans incorrectly state that today's HIV tests can determine infection within a month after exposure and 10 percent state that they do not know when the test can determine, with confidence, whether or not someone has been infected with HIV.

HIV/AIDS and Local Opinion Leaders in the African American Community

What makes them local opinion leaders?

They are opinion leaders because in the past 12 months, they have participated in at least three of the following activities:

- Attended a public meeting on town or school affairs (84 per-cent);
- Served as an officer of some club or organization (74 percent);
- Helped organize a group or event in support of a cause (70 percent);
- Served on a local committee, such as a school board or community council (45 percent)
- Made public speeches (43 percent);
- Contacted members of Congress or a US Senator (33 percent);
- Worked on a political campaign (26 percent);
- Were interviewed or quoted by the media about an important issue (20 percent);
- Wrote a letter to a newspaper that was published (14 percent).

Who are local opinion leaders?

African American opinion leaders represent 21 percent of the African American sample.

- They are somewhat older than African Americans in general. Half of all opinion leaders are in the 30-49 age group (52 percent).
- They are more educated than African Americans overall (and Americans overall); almost 2 out of 3 (62 percent) African American opinion leaders have some college education or more.
- Opinion leaders also earn significantly more than African Americans as a whole, with 30 percent reporting family incomes of \$40,000 or more in 1996. Only 19 percent of African Americans are in this category.
- Most opinion leaders, like African Americans in general, are from urban areas and from the South.
- Finally, most opinion leaders are Democrats (70 percent) which is slightly higher than African Americans overall (63 percent) and much higher than Americans overall (33 percent)

Given the role of local opinion leaders in African American communities, how do their attitudes toward and knowledge of HIV/AIDS compare to African Americans in general?

African American Opinion Leaders view AIDS as an urgent health problem.

- Like all African Americans, opinion leaders view AIDS as the most urgent health problem today (54 percent).
- At the same time, they are less likely to say that AIDS is a more urgent problem for the country today (47 compared to 58 percent of all African Americans) than it was a few years ago.
- And a higher percentage of opinion leaders believes that the country is making progress in the fight against AIDS (52 compared to 45 percent).
- Like African Americans in general, they believe that AIDS is a more urgent problem for their local community (45 percent) than it was a few years ago or about as urgent (23 percent).
- Only a quarter of opinion leaders (24 percent), and of African Americans overall (25 percent), believe that their local communities are making progress in the fight against AIDS.
- When asked, however, if their local community was making progress against AIDS, opinion leaders were more likely than African Americans overall to say that AIDS has never been a problem for their local communities (32 compared to 24 percent).

African American opinion leaders report more personal experience with people with HIV and AIDS.

- Opinion leaders perceive the epidemic as slightly more serious for people they know (61 compared to 56 percent of African Americans overall).
- And they are much more likely to know people who have AIDS, have died from AIDS, or have tested positive for HIV (63 compared to 49 percent)

- At the same time, they are personally less concerned about becoming infected with HIV. Only 38 percent of opinion leaders, compared to half (50 percent) of all African Americans are very concerned.
- Unlike African Americans in general and all other subgroups of the African American population in this survey, opinion leaders' concern about becoming infected is more likely to have decreased than increased over the last few years.

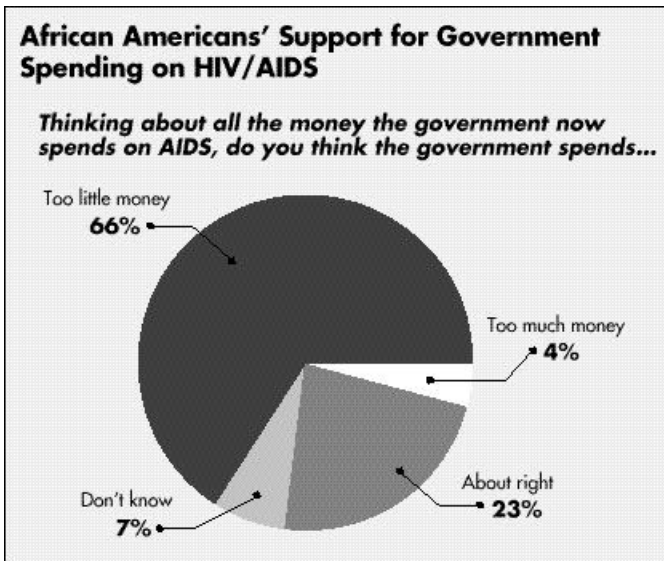
African American opinion leaders' overall impressions of the response of government and community leaders to the AIDS epidemic are similar to those of African Americans overall.

- Most African American opinion leaders (70 percent) think that the government spends too little on AIDS.
- Opinion leaders are more likely to say that federal spending for AIDS, relative to other health problems, is too low (62 percent compared to 54 percent of all African Americans).
- Opinion leaders are as or more supportive of federal spending on HIV and AIDS education and other prevention activities (98 percent), making new treatments available to more people infected with HIV (99 percent), and researching more effective treatments (97 percent).
- Like African Americans overall, African American opinion leaders rank AIDS vaccine research as the top priority for federal spending (41 percent of opinion leaders and 47 percent of all African Americans).

African Americans Support Federal Spending On AIDS/HIV

African Americans show significant support for more government efforts in the fight against AIDS. Most believe that the government is not spending enough money on AIDS (66 percent). Even when compared to the amount of money the federal government spends on other health problems, such as heart disease or cancer, a majority (54 percent) still says spending on AIDS is too low. The support of African Americans for spending not only stands

out above that of all Americans (40 percent says the federal government spending is too low in the context of other health problems) but also has endured over time. In 1995, 58 percent said spending was too low, even in light of spending on other health problems.



African Americans advocate spending in a range of areas. More than nine in ten African Americans support federal spending on: HIV/AIDS education and other prevention activities; improve access to new combination drug therapies (including helping lower income HIV infected people pay for these new drugs); and continued research to find more effective treatments. Research to find an AIDS vaccine is rated as the top federal spending priority; prevention and education efforts rank number two.

Needle Exchange

A majority (59 percent) of African American respondents favor "needle exchange programs, which offer clean needles to IV drug users in exchange for used ones, to help stop the spread of HIV" (as compared to 58 percent of all Americans). Offered an argument voiced by opponents of needle exchange, namely that these programs may send the message that it's okay to use illegal drugs, support drops among African Americans: 40 percent favors, 55 percent opposes.

Knowledge Levels High Among African Americans About HIV/AIDS, But Misperceptions Exist

Overall, there was a high level of general knowledge about AIDS among African Americans:

- 97 percent of African Americans knows that HIV can be transmitted during sexual intercourse;
- 84 percent of African Americans know that there are drugs available to treat HIV which can lengthen life of a person infected with HIV;
- 91 percent of African Americans knows that a pregnant woman with HIV can pass it to her baby, 59 percent knows that she can take steps to reduce the risk of infecting her child.

While a majority (67 percent) of African Americans knows that a vaccine is not available at present to protect people from getting AIDS, one in three (33 percent) incorrectly believes there is a vaccine available or isn't sure. And although most African Americans know that there is no cure for AIDS, 21 percent thinks there is a cure.

Similar to all Americans, African Americans are knowledgeable about HIV and AIDS. While we know that knowledge does not necessarily translate into behavior change, information is an important first step. ²³

Income, Education and Attitudes Towards Knowledge of HIV/AIDS Among African Americans

Individuals with lower incomes and less education may be at greater risk of HIV infection. In addition, there is some indication that those with less education are significantly less likely to have access to important and cost effective drugs needed to prevent AIDS related opportunistic infections such as Pneumocystis Carinii Pneumonia, which is preventable yet still accounts for a significant number of new AIDS cases.²¹ We examined the survey data of those with incomes less than \$20,000 (34 percent of the sample) and those with less than high school education (23 percent of the sample). There is some overlap between these two subgroups; those with less education are also likely to have lower incomes (60 percent).²²

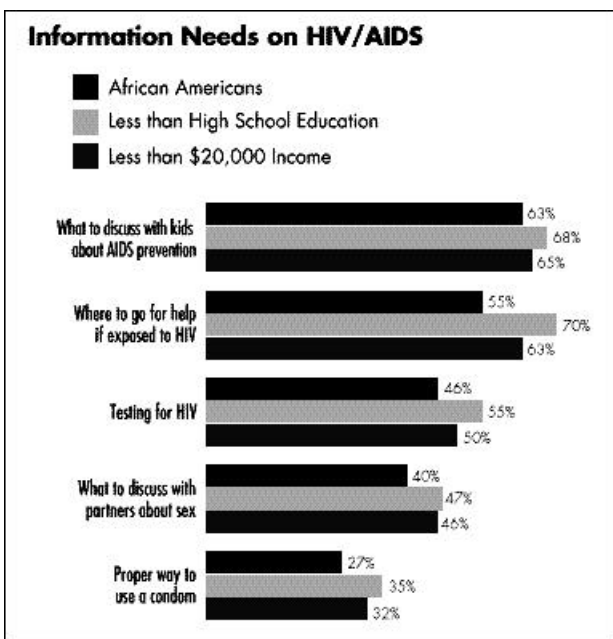
African Americans with lower incomes and less education share the same sense of urgency about HIV/AIDS in the country today:

- Over half (52 percent) of those with lower incomes rate AIDS as the most urgent health problem facing the nation today.

- Those with less education also rate AIDS as the most urgent health problem (45 percent).

AIDS appears to be a more serious problem for people they know, compared to African Americans overall.

- Sixty-one percent of those with lower incomes say that AIDS is a very serious problem for people they know compared to 56 percent of the overall sample.
- Seventy percent of less educated African Americans say that AIDS is a very serious problem for people they know.



At the same time, however, they are less likely to say that they personally know someone who has AIDS, has died from AIDS, or has tested positive for HIV.

- Whereas almost half of all African Americans say they know someone, only 33 percent of those with less than a high school education and 44 percent of those with less than \$20,000 income say they know someone in these categories. Both groups are very concerned about becoming infected with HIV and more so than African Americans in general.
- Almost three in five of those with less education (58 percent) and those with lower incomes (60 percent) are very concerned about becoming infected with HIV compared to one in two (50 percent) of African

Americans overall.

- Compared to all African Americans, they are more likely to say their concern has grown over recent years .

African Americans with less education and lower incomes express slightly greater information needs than African Americans overall.

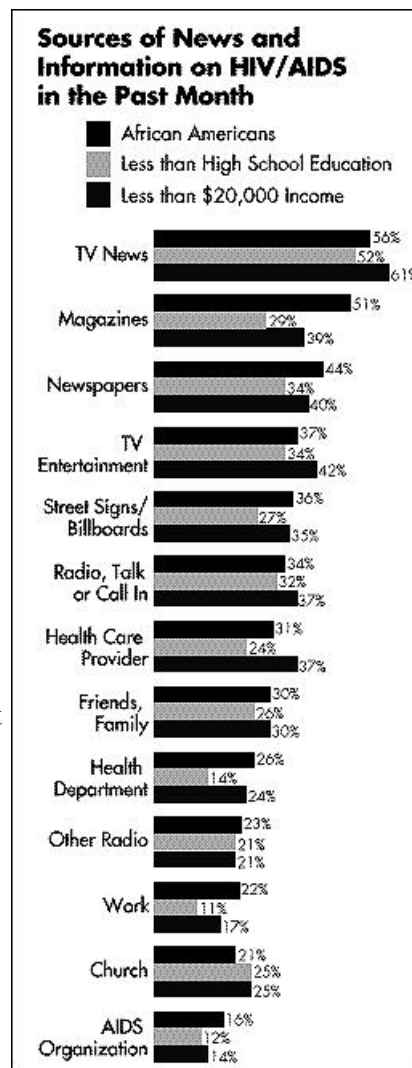
- They want more information about condom use, discussing sex with partners, talking about AIDS prevention with children, getting tested, and where to go for help if exposed to HIV.
- When asked to rank information needs, those with lower incomes, like African Americans in general, cite the need for information about discussing AIDS prevention with children as their greatest information need.
- Those with less education cite information about where to go for help if exposed to HIV as their greatest information need (those with less education are less likely to have children, reflecting in part their younger age).
- Those with less education also express the greatest information needs.

African Americans with lower incomes and less education get information about HIV/AIDS from different sources:

- Those with lower incomes rely more on TV news, TV entertainment, and health care providers for HIV/AIDS information than African Americans overall.
- Those with less education state less of a reliance on these sources than African Americans overall.

There are somewhat different levels of knowledge among those with less education and lower income compared to African Americans in general.

- Although most correctly state that there is no vaccine available to protect a person from getting AIDS, greater proportions of those with less education (22 percent) and those with lower incomes (17 percent) thought there was a vaccine compared to 13 percent of African Americans overall.
- Similarly, a greater proportion of those with less education (30 percent) and those with lower incomes (27 percent) incorrectly believe there is a cure for AIDS; this is greater than the proportion of African Americans overall (21 percent).



Those with less education are less likely to have received information about HIV and AIDS from a doctor or health care provider.

- Only 37 percent of those with less education, compared to 48 percent of all African Americans and 51 percent of those with lower income levels, have talked to their health care provider about HIV and AIDS.
- Less (25 percent) have talked to their providers about the risks of being infected with HIV, compared to 35 percent of all African Americans and 38 percent of those with lower incomes.

- Finally, they are much less likely (19 percent) to have talked with a provider about getting tested for HIV compared to 33 percent of all African Americans and 35 percent of those with lower incomes.

African Americans with less education are also less likely to have been tested for HIV.

- Whereas 56 percent of all African Americans and 61 percent of those with lower incomes have been tested, 45 percent of those with less education have ever been tested.
- Twenty-two percent say they did not get tested because they do not suspect a problem (compared to 13 percent of African Americans overall and 12 percent of those with lower incomes who gave this as a reason for not getting tested).

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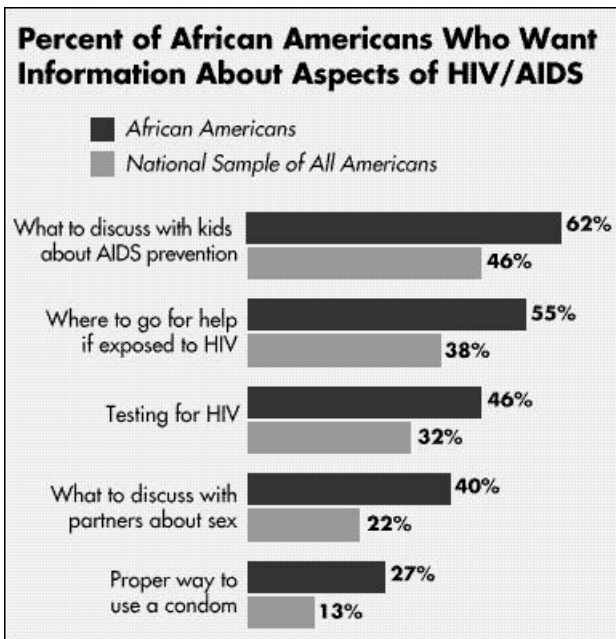


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African Americans Report Need For Information About HIV/AIDS

Almost 3 in 5 African Americans (62 percent) want help talking with their children about AIDS prevention. Many also say they need information about HIV testing (46 percent) and about where to go for help if exposed to HIV (55 percent).

Forty percent of African Americans report the need for information on what to discuss with partners about sex. And slightly more than one in four (27 percent) says they need information about the proper way to use condoms.



Information Sources

Some 46 percent of African Americans cite the media-TV, radio, newspapers or magazines as their leading source of information about HIV/AIDS in the month prior to the survey. Eleven percent names their doctor or health care provider, 6 percent says they got information from work, and 5 percent lists family, friends and acquaintances as the

number one source. Two percent says they received the most information from materials distributed by AIDS organizations or advocacy groups.

African Americans report high levels of news consumption related to HIV/AIDS. Four in five (78 percent) have seen or heard a lot or some news coverage of HIV and AIDS on television, radio, in newspapers and other media in the last year or so. Almost one in two African Americans (49 percent) says they have seen a lot or some news specifically about the new combination drug treatments.

In spite of recent advances in the treatment of AIDS which have spurred greater optimism about the AIDS epidemic, only one in five African Americans says today's news coverage about HIV/AIDS gives the impression that AIDS is a less urgent problem now than it was a few years ago. Eight in ten say coverage portrays the problem of AIDS as more urgent (39 percent) or about the same (39 percent).

African Americans support using T V and film to educate people about HIV prevention. Most African Americans believe that the major television networks should accept advertising from condom manufacturers (74 percent) and that when movies and TV shows deal with sexual relationships, there ought to be more references to condom use (69 percent). This reflects slightly higher support than is voiced by the national sample of all Americans: 62 percent supports condom advertising and 55 percent says there should be more condom-references in movies and on TV.

Attitudes of African American parents toward HIV/AIDS are similar to those of African Americans in general and to parents overall. African American parents represented 46 percent of the African Americans surveyed.

- Almost 7 out of every 10 African American parents (68 percent) are very concerned about their son or daughter becoming infected with HIV.
- Half (49 percent) are more concerned today than they were a few years ago.
- More than 3 out of 5 African American parents (65 percent) say they need information about discussing AIDS prevention with children. Parents rate this as the most important information need (43 percent),

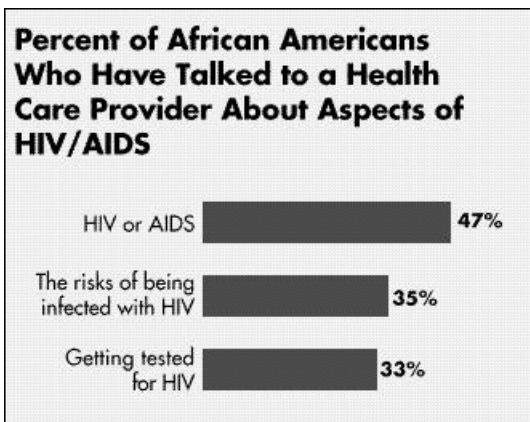
more so than the African American sample overall (36 percent).

- Seventy-two percent of African American parents believe that the federal government is spending too little money on AIDS.
- Almost all African American parents believe that the federal government should spend money on HIV and AIDS education and other prevention efforts (96 percent).
- Most parents think that major television networks should accept advertising from condom manufacturers for broadcast (76 percent).
- African American parents are also very supportive of including more references to condom use in movies and television shows which deal with sexual relationships (75 percent). Their support is slightly higher than African Americans overall (69 percent).

Talking With Providers: Health Professionals As Information Sources

Half of African Americans (52 percent) have never talked to a doctor or health care provider about any aspect of HIV or AIDS, including the risks of being infected with HIV and getting tested for HIV. Only one in three African Americans has talked to a health care provider specifically about getting tested for HIV (33 percent), or their personal risk of being infected (35 percent).

When it comes to the actual conversations about testing for HIV, a majority of African Americans (58 percent) says they raised the subject with their doctor or health care provider as opposed to waiting until the provider brought it up. However, when talking about risks of being infected with HIV, the majority of African Americans says a doctor brought it up (51 percent).



On a related topic, African Americans who have tested for HIV we're more likely to discuss the results with a health professional than the subset of all Americans who have been tested. In fact, more than two-thirds of African Americans say they discussed their results with a doctor, medical professional, or counselor, compared to half of all Americans. Still, 31 percent did not.

Implications Of The Survey Findings

The Kaiser Family Foundation National Survey of African Americans on HIV/AIDS reveals important findings about the perceptions of African Americans which can help pave the way for future efforts to address HIV/AIDS within the African American community. First, African Americans express a great sense of urgency about HIV/AIDS as a national public health concern, a community concern, and personally. Their sense of urgency exceeds that of the national sample of all Americans and continues to grow in spite of mounting optimism about declining death rates and better treatments. Heightened urgency is consistent across all African American subgroups but is particularly striking among younger African Americans, who express greater worry about HIV/AIDS and personal risk than African Americans overall. Concern among African Americans may reflect personal experience: African Americans are more likely to know someone with HIV or with AIDS, or who has died from AIDS. This is certainly borne out by the epidemiological data, which indicate the increasing impact of HIV/AIDS on the African American community.

Our survey findings also suggest a relatively high level of general knowledge about HIV/AIDS among African Americans when compared to all Americans although there is still a need for information. Importantly, African Americans express a greater desire for information about HIV/AIDS in all areas including talking with kids about

HIV/AIDS, where to go for help if exposed to HIV, and testing. The overall appetite for information suggests both a climate of receptivity toward education campaigns and a desire to be involved in reducing personal risk and risk to children.

We know that knowledge does not always translate into behavior change, but this national survey does start to highlight information needs as well as venues for targeted prevention programs and information campaigns. Information sources cited by African Americans differ from those of all Americans, as do their experiences talking with health care providers about HIV/AIDS. This is also true for subgroups of African Americans, including women, young adults, and those with lower incomes and less education.

Finally, there is strong support among African Americans for more local and national efforts in AIDS education, research, and prevention programs. African Americans see a role for national, state, and local initiatives in the fight against AIDS and support strongly prevention education. While African Americans say community groups do care about the fight against AIDS, few believe that these groups are actually doing that a lot in the fight against AIDS. The impressions of local, state and national governments are even less favorable, with fewer than one in five African Americans saying governments are doing a lot to combat AIDS. There is room for further action.

Methodology

The Kaiser Family Foundation National Survey of African Americans on HIV/AIDS was designed by the Kaiser Family Foundation and conducted for the Foundation by Princeton Survey Research Associates. The data were collected in conjunction with a larger study of Americans' knowledge and opinions about HIV/AIDS, which followed a similar survey conducted in 1995. Participants in the African American survey were interviewed by telephone between September 19 and October 26, 1997. Respondents were selected if they self-identified as black or African American and not of Hispanic or Latino background. The responses from a total of 811 interviews of African American adults, age 18 or older, are reported here. Data were weighted to match U.S. Census Bureau estimates of age, sex, education and regional distributions of African American adults living in telephone households in the continental United States. The margin of sampling error for results based on the total sample is plus or minus 4 percentage points although the margin of error is larger for some subgroups.

End Notes

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (1997). HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report, Midyear Edition Vol. 9, No.1.
2. Karon, J.M. et. al. (1996). "Prevalence of HIV Infection in the United States, 1984 to 1992", Journal of the American Medical Association, Vol. 276, No. 2.
3. Throughout this report, the term African American is applied to the survey sample and epidemiological data to represent non Hispanic Blacks, unless otherwise noted.
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (1982). Kaposi's Sarcoma (KS), Pneumocystis Carinii Pneumonia (PCP), and Other Opportunistic Infections (OI): Cases Reported to CDC as of June 15, 1982. First Report.
5. U.S. Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports, Population Estimates and objections, Series P-25. Note that data were reported by race only, not by race and ethnicity.
6. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (1997). HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report, Midyear Edition Vol. 9, No.1.
7. U.S. Bureau of the Census. United States Population Estimates, by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin, 1990-1996. Release PPL-57.
8. National Center for Health Statistics. (1997). Health, United States, 1996-97 and Injury Chartbook. Hyattsville, Maryland. Cases per 100,000 population for 12 month period ending June 30, 1996.
9. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (1997). HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report, Midyear Edition Vol. 9, No.1. Pediatric cases represent those under 13 years of age.
10. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (1997). HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report, Midyear Edition Vol. 9, No. 1.
11. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (1997). "Update: Trends in AIDS Incidence - United States, 1996."
12. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, Vol. 46, No. 37. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Office of the Associate Director of Minority Health.
13. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (1997). "Update: ends in AIDS Incidence - United States, 1996". Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, Vol. 46, No. 37.
14. Personal communication, Drs. Martin Shapiro and Samuel Bozzette, February 1998.
15. Others include the National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) from 1988- 1990 and Blendon et.al. (1992), "Public Opinion and AIDS: Lessons for the Second Decade", Journal of the American Medical Association, Vol. 267, No. 7. The NHIS, a longitudinal survey, discontinued surveying Americans about HIV/AIDS after 1990.
16. Refers to the Kaiser Family Foundation 1997 National Survey of Americans on AIDS/HIV, a nationally representative sample of

American adults, including representative proportions of minority respondents. This sample is herein referred to as "all Americans."

17. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (1997). HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report, Midyear Edition Vol. 9, No.1.

18. National Center for Health Statistics. (1997). Health, United States, 1996-97 and Injury Chartbook. Hyattsville, Maryland. Cases per 100,000 population for 12 month period ending June 30, 1996.

19. AIDS Research Institute/The Center for AIDS Prevention Studies, University of California and the Harvard AIDS Institute. (1997). Dangerous Inhibitions: How America is Letting AIDS Become an Epidemic of the Young.

20. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1995 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System.

21. Preliminary data from the HIV Cost and Services Utilization Study. Personal communication, Drs. Martin Shapiro and Samuel Bozzette, February 1998.

22. Thirty-five percent of those earning less than \$20,000 have less than a high school education.

23. De Zousa. (1995). "The Role of HIV Counseling and Testing in Changing Risk Behavior in Developing Countries," AIDS, ol. 9, Suppl. A; Donovan, C. et.al. (1994). "A Review of the HIV-Related Sexual Behavior of Gay Men and Men Who Have Sex With Men," AIDS Care, Vol. 6, No. 5; Hospers, H.J. and Kolk, G. (1995). "Determinants of Safe and Risk-Taking Sexual Behavior Among Gay Men: A Review," AIDS Education and prevention, Vol. 7, No. 1.

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