



# UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

**Taking drugs can lead to HIV/AIDS.**



before you start.  
before you shoot.  
before you share.

[www.unodc.org/thinkaids](http://www.unodc.org/thinkaids)

## General facts

- Among the estimated 16 million people injecting drugs worldwide, one in five are likely to be HIV positive.
- Sharing contaminated needles and syringes is one of the quickest and easiest ways of getting and transmitting HIV.

## Young people

- In 2008 there were 2.7 million new HIV infections—about 7,400 each day—and 2 million HIV-related deaths.
- Young people aged 15 to 24 account for an estimated 40 per cent of all new adult (15+) HIV infections worldwide.
- Many young people still lack accurate information about how to avoid exposure to the virus.

## Eastern Europe and Central Asia

- The number of newly reported HIV infections is rising, mainly among injecting drug users, sex workers and their respective sexual partners.
- Contaminated injecting equipment is the major mode of HIV transmission in the region, accounting for 57 per cent of all newly diagnosed HIV infections in Eastern Europe in 2007.
- Nearly 90 per cent of all newly reported HIV infections in the region are in the Russian Federation and Ukraine.



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## South, East and South-East Asia

- Transmission of HIV is often via injecting drug use, and the sharing of syringes is a common practice among injecting drug users in the region.
- Many countries have very high rates of HIV infection among injecting drug users.
- In China, an overlap between unsafe injecting drug use, unprotected commercial sex and other risk factors is fuelling the spread of HIV.
- In India, recent surveys suggest rising HIV transmissions among injecting drug users.
- In Pakistan, the number of injecting drug users has nearly doubled since 2000, and studies show that HIV prevalence among this population is rising rapidly.

## North America

- In the United States, about one in five newly diagnosed HIV infections in women are due to unsafe injecting drug use (US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2007).

## Western and Central Europe

- In 2007, injecting drug users accounted for 8% and 13% of new HIV diagnoses in Western and Central Europe respectively.

- In some countries unsafe injecting drug use remains the most common mode of HIV transmission.
- The declining or stabilizing trends in new HIV infections among injecting drug users in the region are due to the wide introduction of harm reduction policies and programmes in the region.

## Latin America

- About one third of all people living with HIV in Latin America reside in Brazil; in this country HIV has spread to injecting drug users and eventually to the general population, with increasing numbers of women becoming infected.
- As a result of harm reduction programmes in the country, Brazil has reported declining HIV prevalence rates among injecting drug users.
- In Mexico, HIV prevalence among injecting drug users was 6 per cent in 2007, and when surveyed, more than 85 per cent of injecting drug users said they had used non-sterile injecting equipment.

### Sources:

- UNAIDS, WHO "AIDS epidemic update: November 2009"
- Mathers, B. et al. "Global Epidemiology of Injecting Drug Use and HIV among People Who Inject Drugs: A Systematic Review", The Lancet 2008, Volume 372.