



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive



HIV & AIDS in Ireland 2010

Summary

- 331 new HIV diagnoses in 2010 (240 males and 89 females)
- Incident HIV diagnoses was 7.8 per 100,000 population
- 16.2% decrease in cases compared to 2009
- New diagnoses among MSM remain high and sex between men is now the predominant mode of transmission in Ireland
- Heterosexual transmission accounted for 37.2% of new cases, down from 63.7% of cases in 2002. In particular, there has been a reduction in the number of cases among people from high prevalence countries
- 6.6% of new infections among injecting drug users
- 136 (41%) of new cases born in Ireland
- 54 new AIDS diagnoses reported in 2010 with 29 of the AIDS cases reported at the same time as HIV diagnosis.
- 10 deaths among AIDS cases reported

Table 1: Newly diagnosed cases of HIV infection reported in the WHO European Region and by geographical region

Indicator	WHO		Ireland	
	ER 2009	WEST 2009	2009	2010
No. of HIV cases	53,427	24,703	395	331
Rate per 100,000	8.5	6.7	9.3	7.8
Percentage of cases				
Age 15-24 years (%)	12.2	9.8	12.9	10.6
Female (%)	34.7	28.4	34.7	26.9
Probable route of transmission				
Heterosexual (%)	42.7	40.3	40.5	37.2
MSM (%)	18.1	36.6	34.9	40.5
IDU (%)	22.0	3.9	7.6	6.6
Unknown (%)	15.9	18.1	15.4	11.2

Source: ECDC 2009 report <http://ecdc.europa.eu/>
WHO ER: WHO European Region
WHO West: WHO European Region West

Introduction

The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and the consequences of infection continue to challenge the global community. In 2009, an estimated 33.3 million people were living with HIV, and of those, 2.6 million were newly diagnosed in 2009.

The purpose of this report is to present data on cases of HIV and AIDS that were reported to the HPSC during 2010.

Table 1 below contrasts the key findings from the national case based surveillance programme during 2010 with the most recent data from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). Among the indicators listed is the HIV prevalence among young people, aged 15–24 years. This is a core indicator as agreed during the 2001 Special Session of the UN General Assembly on HIV/AIDS (UNGASS).

Further tables and figures showing annual trends in HIV and AIDS can be found on the HPSC website at <http://www.hpsc.ie/hpsc/A-Z/HepatitisHIVAIDSandSTIs/HIVandAIDS/SurveillanceReports/>

2010 data

A total of 331 new HIV diagnoses (240 men and 89 women) were reported to the HPSC during 2010. This compares to 395 in 2009 and represents a 16.2% decrease. Incident reports of new HIV diagnoses in Ireland in 2010 was 7.8 per 100,000 population (11.3 per 100,000 men and 4.2 per 100,000 women). The cumulative total number of HIV infections reported up to the end of December 2010 is 5,968.

Completed surveillance report forms were received for 290 (87.6%) of the newly diagnosed cases. Surveillance report forms for the remaining 41 (12.4%) cases are outstanding at this time.

Figure 1 shows the number of HIV diagnoses annually in Ireland from 1990 to 2010.

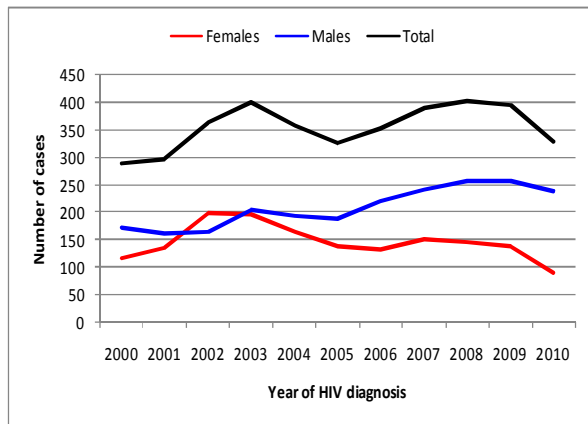


Figure 1: New HIV diagnoses by year of diagnosis and gender (2000 to 2010)

Probable route of transmission

Figure 2 shows the number of new diagnoses from 1994 to 2010 by probable route of transmission. Transmission mode was unknown for 11.2% of new cases in 2010

Table 2, 3, 4 and 5 provide a further breakdown of newly diagnosed HIV cases by gender, age, geographic origin and area of residence.

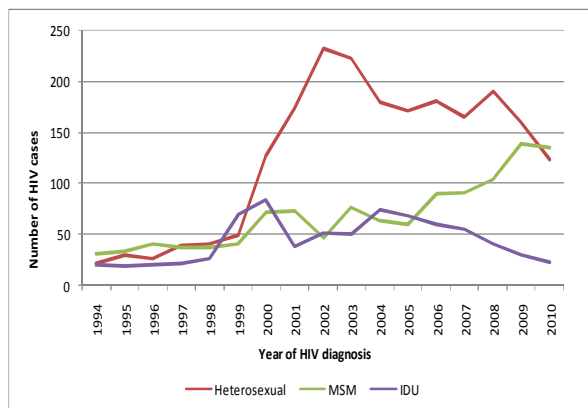


Figure 2: New HIV diagnoses in Ireland by probable route of transmission (1994 to 2010)

Men who have sex with men (MSM)

- The highest proportion of new HIV diagnoses in 2010 was among MSM (40.5%).
- The number of new cases among MSM (134) is very similar to 2009 (138). Between 2005 and 2009, the annual number of new cases in MSM have more than doubled from 60 to 138.
- The median age of new cases among MSM was 34.0 years (range 20-62 years).
- 67.9% (91) were born in Ireland, 11.2% (15) were born in Latin America, 6.7% (9) were born in Western Europe and 6.0% (8) were born in Central and Eastern Europe.
- Of the new cases among MSM at the time of HIV diagnosis, 100 were asymptomatic, 11 were diagnosed with AIDS and four had acute HIV infection.

Heterosexual transmission

- 37.2% of new infections were attributed to heterosexual transmission.
- The number of cases attributed to heterosexual transmission decreased from 160 in 2009 to 123 in 2010.
- Since 2002 when heterosexuals cases peaked at 232, there has been a general trend downwards.
- Of the 123 heterosexual cases, 52.0% (64) were from a country with a generalised HIV epidemic, 7.3% (9) had a sexual partner from a country with a generalised HIV epidemic and 4.0% (5) had a high risk sexual partner.
- 69 of the new heterosexual cases were female and 54 were male.
- The median age among heterosexual cases was 34.0 years (range 18-62 years), 32.0 in females (range 18-53) and 37.0 in males (range 22-62).
- 50.4% (36 female and 26 male) were born in sub-Saharan Africa and 25.2% (13 female and 18 male) were born in Ireland.
- Of the new heterosexual cases at the time of HIV diagnosis, 83 were asymptomatic, 11 had AIDS and five had an acute HIV infection.

Injecting Drug Users (IDUs)

- 6.6% of new infections were among IDUs.
- The annual number of new cases among IDUs has decreased every year since 2004 (72).
- 18 of the new cases were male and 4 were female.
- The median age among IDUs was 32.5 years (range 19-50 years).
- 36.4% (8 cases) were born in Ireland and 36.4% (8 cases) were born in Central and Eastern Europe.
- Of the new cases in IDUs at the time of HIV diagnosis, 11 were asymptomatic, two had AIDS and two had an acute HIV infection.

Mother to Child transmission (MTCT)

- There were nine new diagnoses of HIV infection in children (younger than 16 years). The probable route of transmission was mother to child transmission (MTCT) for eight of the nine cases and was unknown for one. There were a further two cases among adults where the probable route of transmission was MTCT giving a total of 10 MTCT cases in 2010.
- Of the ten MTCT cases, six were born in sub-Saharan Africa, two in Central Europe and two in Ireland. The mothers of the two Irish born cases were from sub-Saharan Africa.
- In addition, there were 107 babies born in Ireland during 2010. Based on serial HIV PCR testing; 73 are not infected, 34 remain of indeterminate status (i.e. do not meet the criteria for HIV infection and are <18 months at time of test) and none are infected.

Gender

Table 2 shows the 2010 cases by probable route of transmission and gender.

Of the 89 female cases newly diagnosed in 2010, 25 (28.1%) were reported to be pregnant at HIV diagnosis, 47 (52.8%) were not pregnant at diagnosis and the status of the remaining 17 is unknown.

Table 2: New HIV diagnoses in Ireland - by probable route of transmission and gender (2010)

Probable route of transmission	Gender	Number
MSM	Male	134
	Female	69
Heterosexual contact	Male	54
	Sub total	123
	Female	4
Injecting Drug Use	Male	18
	Sub total	22
	Female	5
Mother to Child	Male	5
	Sub total	10
	Female	1
Other	Male	4
	Sub total	5
	Female	10
Undetermined	Male	25
	Unknown	2
	Sub total	37
	Total	331

Age group

Table 3 details the 2010 cases by probable route of transmission and age group.

41% of new cases were aged between 25 and 35 years and the median age was 33.0 (range 0 to 76).

Table 3: New HIV diagnoses in Ireland by probable route of transmission and age group at diagnosis (2010)

Age	HC	IDU	MSM	MCT	Other	Unk	Total
<15		-	-	8	-	1	9
15-19	4	1	-	1	-	1	7
20-24	11	1	12	1	-	3	28
25-29	25	6	30	-	-	6	67
30-34	28	4	29	-	-	8	69
35-39	15	3	22	-	-	5	45
40-44	19	5	16	-	2	8	50
45-49	8	1	12	-	-	1	22
50-54	10	1	8	-	-	2	21
55-59	-	-	4	-	3	1	8
60+	3	-	1	-	-	1	5
Total	123	22	134	10	5	37	331

Geographic Origin

Of the 331 cases

- 136 cases (41.1%) were born in Ireland
- 71 cases (21.5%) were born in sub-Saharan Africa,
- 32 cases (9.7%) were born in Central and Eastern Europe
- 22 cases (6.6%) were born in Latin America and Caribbean
- 15 cases (4.5%) were born in Western Europe,

Table 4 and Figure 3 detail the 2010 cases by probable route of transmission and geographic origin.

Table 4: New HIV diagnoses in Ireland - by probable route of transmission and geographic origin (2010)

Probable route of transmission	2010	
MSM	Ireland	91
	Western Europe	9
	Central & Eastern Europe	8
	Latin America & Caribbean	15
	Foreign born - other	1
	Unknown	10
	Total	134
Hetero	Ireland	31
	Sub-Saharan Africa	62
	Central & Eastern Europe	9
	Western Europe	5
	Foreign born - other	10
	Unknown	6
	Total	123
IDU	Ireland	8
	Central & Eastern Europe	8
	Unknown	6
	Total	22

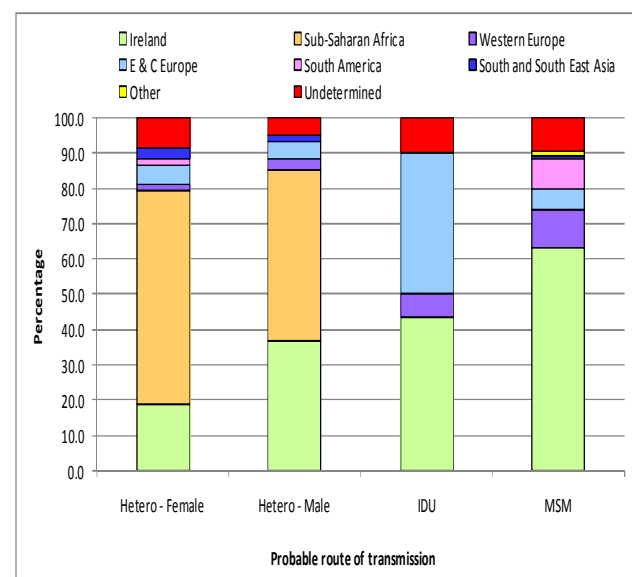


Figure 3: New cases by probable route of transmission and geographic origin (2010)

Area of residence

Table 5 details the 2010 cases by probable route of transmission and area of residence.

Table 5: New HIV diagnoses by probable route of transmission and area of residence at diagnosis (2010)

Probable route of transmission	East*	non-East	Unknown	Total
Heterosexual	74	30	19	123
IDU	9	8	5	22
Mother to Child	5	5	-	10
MSM	88	29	17	134
Other	3	1	1	5
Undetermined	1	2	34	37
Total	180	75	76	331

Heterosexuals – transmission subcategory

Table 6 provides further detail on the 123 heterosexual cases by transmission subcategory.

Of the 123 cases, 52.0% (64) were from a country with a generalised HIV epidemic, 7.3% (9) had a partner from a country with a generalised HIV epidemic and 4.0% (5) had a high risk partner. Further information on heterosexual subcategory was unavailable for 36.5% of cases.

Table 6: New HIV diagnoses in heterosexuals by transmission subcategory (2010)

Transmission Subcategory	No.
Case from a country with a generalised HIV epidemic	64
Case with a partner from a country with a generalised HIV epidemic	9
Case with a high risk partner	5
Other/Undetermined	45
Total heterosexual cases	123

Stage of infection

Table 7 describes the stage of infection for HIV cases diagnosed in 2010.

62.2% of cases were asymptomatic at time of HIV diagnosis and 8.8% were diagnosed with AIDS at the time of their HIV diagnosis (i.e. diagnosed “late”).

Table 7: Newly diagnosed HIV infections in Ireland by stage of infection (2010)

Stage of Infection	Total	MSM	Hetero	IDU
Acute HIV Infection	11	4	5	2
Asymptomatic	206	100	83	11
Symptomatic non-AIDS	36	11	20	3
AIDS	29	11	11	2
Unknown/Other	49	8	4	4
Total	331	134	123	22

AIDS and deaths among AIDS cases

Fifty four new AIDS diagnoses were reported in 2010 (one diagnosed in 2007, seven in 2008, 16 in 2009 and 30 in 2010), bringing the total number of AIDS diagnoses reported to the end of December 2010 to 1,074. The total number of deaths among AIDS cases reported to the end of December 2010 is 421 with ten deaths among AIDS cases reported in 2010 (five deaths in 2009 and five deaths in 2010).[†]

Figure 4 shows the number of AIDS cases and deaths among AIDS cases from 1990 to 2010.

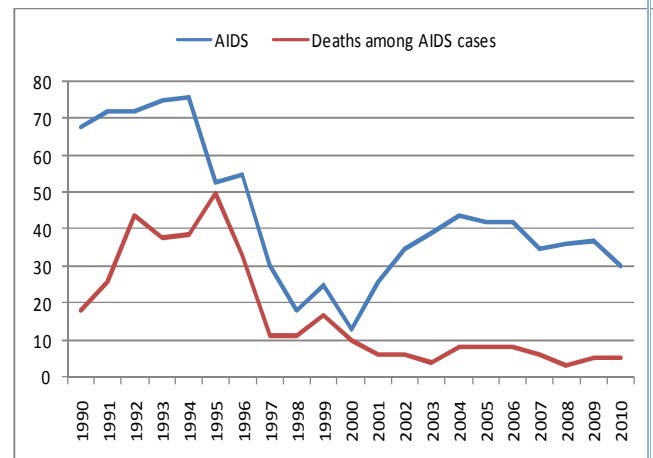


Figure 4: AIDS cases and deaths among AIDS cases, 1990 to 2010

* Includes Dublin, Kildare and Wicklow

[†] Data on AIDS cases and deaths among AIDS cases should be interpreted with caution due to considerable under-reporting and late reporting. It is expected that further reports, particularly relating to recent years, will be received and the number of AIDS cases will rise for recent years.

Discussion

HIV infection is of major public health importance with evidence of continuing transmission both in Ireland and Europe. In 2010, a total of 331 individuals were newly diagnosed, corresponding to a crude incident rate of 7.4 per 100,000 population. This compares to a rate of 6.7 in the WHO European West region. In addition, there were 54 cases of AIDS and 10 deaths among AIDS cases also reported to the HPSC during 2010.

The total number of HIV infections in 2010 represents a 16.2% decrease compared to 2009 and is largely due to fewer diagnoses among people infected heterosexually (from 160 in 2009 to 123 in 2010). Of the 123 new cases among heterosexuals, 64 (52%) were diagnosed in individuals originating from countries with generalised HIV epidemics compared to 94 cases in 2009.

While the number of new diagnoses among people infected heterosexually has declined, new diagnoses among MSM remain high and sex between men is now the predominant mode of transmission in Ireland. There were 134 new diagnosed among MSM in 2010 with the majority of cases (68%) born in Ireland. The median age at diagnosis was 34 with 31% aged less than 30. Increasing number of HIV infections among MSM has been observed in many other Western European countries and sex between men is now the predominant mode of transmission in the EU/EEA (European Union/European Economic Area). A recent report from ECDC recommended that interventions to control HIV among MSM should be the cornerstone of HIV prevention strategies in countries in Western Europe¹.

The number of cases (22) among Injecting Drug Users (IDUs) has declined in recent years and in 2010 represented 7% of the newly diagnosed cases. Eight of the cases among IDUs were born in Ireland.

During 2010, 29 cases presented with an AIDS defining illness at the time of their HIV diagnosis. It has been estimated that 30% of individuals infected with HIV in Europe are unaware of their infection are at risk of severe complications and possibly death, as they cannot benefit from treatment.¹ Evidence suggests that individuals that are aware of their HIV infection engage less in risky behaviors related to sex and injecting drug use. In order to decrease the number of late presenters, and to ensure early diagnosis and access to treatment and counseling for all, ECDC recommended in a recent report that HIV testing and counseling should be promoted. In addition, they recommended equal access to HIV treatment and care for all population groups.

Acknowledgements

The Health Protection Surveillance Centre would like to sincerely thank all who have contributed to this report—the National Virus Reference Laboratory, Microbiology Laboratories, the Departments of Public Health, Consultants in Infectious Disease/GUM and all other clinicians involved. Data on paediatric infections are provided by the Infectious Disease Unit, Our Lady's Hospital for Children (OLHC), Crumlin.

References

1. European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control/WHO Regional Office for Europe. HIV/AIDS surveillance in Europe 2009. Stockholm: European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control; 2010.