



Centre for Public Health

Faculty of Health and Applied Social Sciences



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Growing numbers of people accessing HIV treatment and care in the North West of England

Today the Centre for Public Health at Liverpool John Moores University and the Health Protection Agency (North West) release latest figures on HIV/AIDS in the North West of England:

The main findings are:

- Overall, the **total** number of people with HIV accessing treatment and care in the North West region in 2009 reached the highest level ever at 6,238; an 8% increase on 2008 figures (5,767) (table 1).
- Forty-three percent of infections in people **new to** HIV services in 2009 were acquired in the UK, and of these UK-acquired infections, most (74%) were acquired through sex between men (table 2)
- Forty-one percent of infections amongst people **new to** HIV services in 2009 were acquired outside the UK and of these, most (80%) were acquired through heterosexual sex (table 2).
- The **total** number of individuals in treatment and care in the region has increased over five-fold since 1996 (figure 1). This increase is a result of continuing high number of new infections (881 cases in 2009) and the fact that death due to AIDS is now relatively rare (only 0.4% of the HIV positive population, 24 people, died of an AIDS related condition in 2009). This death rate is dramatically reduced from the 9% recorded back in 1996 (see figure 1).
- While effective at preventing deaths, treatments are still not a cure for HIV but represent a life time of expensive medications, estimated at around £320,000 per person infected.

Other findings:

- The county of Greater Manchester had the largest number of **cases in total** in 2009 (3,754 individuals) at a rate of 137 per 100,000 residents). The county also saw the highest number of **new cases** (498; a rate of 18 per 100,000 residents; table 1).
- The county of Cumbria had the fewest people with HIV (131; a rate of 25 per 100,000 population) and **new cases** (16; a rate of 3 per 100,000; table 1).

-More follows-



Quote 1

Dr Penny Cook, report author and lead researcher, said:

“The number of people in treatment for HIV in the North West has now reached over 6,000. Many of the new infections were acquired in the UK and would have been entirely preventable. We must ensure that in this difficult economic time resources continue to be invested in prevention, since targeted health promotion campaigns save the NHS a substantial amount of money in the long run by preventing new infections.”

Quote 2

Professor Mark A. Bellis, co-author and Director of the Centre for Public Health commented:

“We now have a better understanding than ever of the HIV virus and of the ways it is transmitted between people but so far this has failed to translate into consistent reductions in new HIV infections each year. As with obesity, smoking and alcohol the challenge is now not just understanding their connection with ill health but finding the most persuasive ways to change people's behaviour.

“As the NHS is transformed, prevention of sexually transmitted infections must be seen as a priority otherwise we risk not just higher levels of HIV but more Chlamydia in young people and infections like syphilis moving from relative scarcity to a frequently transmitted disease.”

Quote 3

Professor Qutub Syed, Director, HPA North West, said: “The fact that more people than ever before are accessing care and treatment in the North West reflects the fact that modern treatments are helping people with HIV to live normal lives for much longer than previously. However, it's worrying that we are seeing so many new cases and that the larger proportion of these were acquired in the UK. The growing number of cases in Greater Manchester is of particular concern.

“We have worked hard at getting safer sex messages across to those who are most at risk and it may be that people are becoming complacent because they see that some people are able to live normal, healthy lives for many years with HIV. However, an apathetic approach to safer sex is a huge mistake. HIV may be treatable, but it is not curable and once acquired people are affected for life. It is a devastating condition and no one should take it lightly.”

Notes to Editors

- The Centre for Public Health at Liverpool John Moores University specialises in applied research and educational programmes which address health issues, from policy development to service delivery (www.cph.org.uk).
- For further details about the report please visit www.cph.org.uk/publications

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**For further information or for interview requests, please contact:
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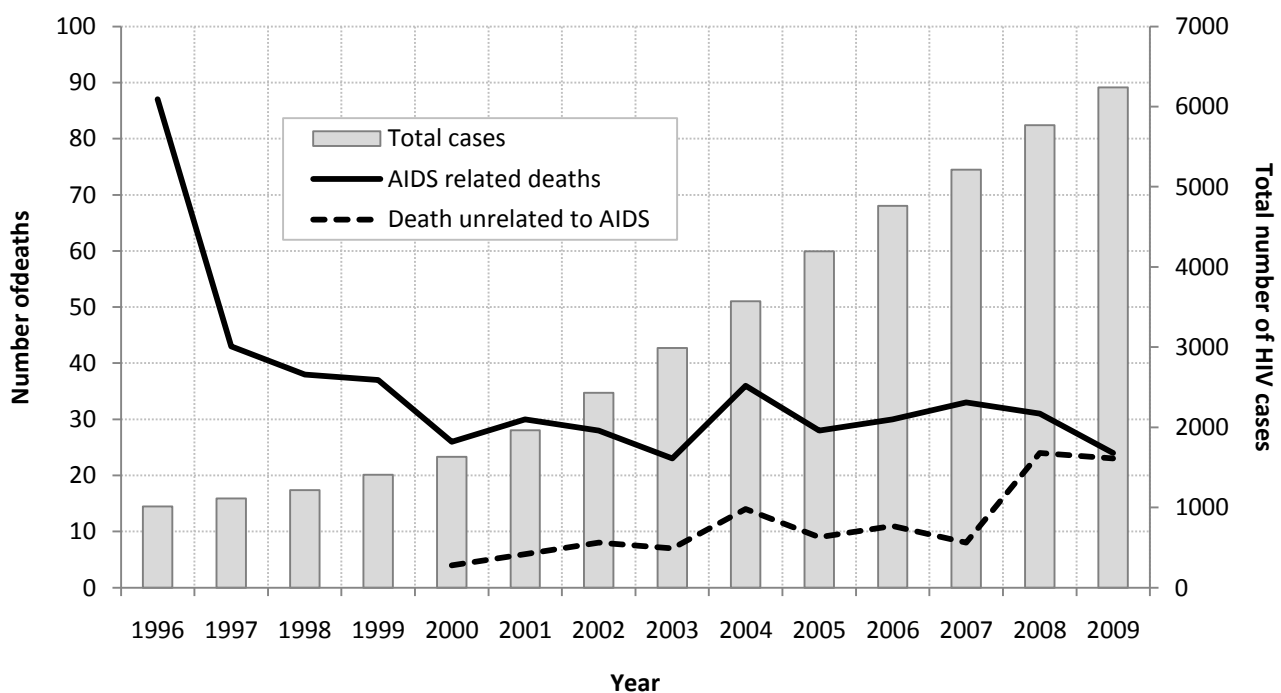
Table 1: New and total cases of HIV/AIDS in the North West of England 2009

County	New cases					All cases				
	Number in 2008	Number in 2009	% change 2005-2009	% change 2008-2009	Rate per 100,000 in 2009	Number in 2008	Number in 2009	% change 2005-2009	% change 2008-2009	Rate per 100,000 in 2009
Cumbria	23	16	33	-30	3.0	123	131	72	7	24.5
Lancashire	110	106	-3	-4	6.8	814	843	35	4	54.2
Greater Manchester	522	498	-7	-5	18.1	3418	3754	52	10	136.5
Merseyside	128	163	37	27	11.3	736	848	67	15	58.7
Cheshire	71	46	-4	-35	4.2	368	384	61	4	35.5
Total North West Residents	854	829	0	-3	11.3	5459	5960	52	9	80.9
Out of region/unknown	71	52	-50	-27	-	308	278	0	-10	-
Total	925	881	-5	-5	-	5767	6238	49	8	-

Table 2: Region of HIV exposure by infection route for new cases of HIV accessing treatment and care in the North West of England, 2009.

Region of HIV Exposure	Infection route						Total (100%)
	MSM	Injecting Drug Use	Heterosexual	Blood/Tissue	Mother to Child	Undetermined	
Abroad	41 (11.4%)	7 (1.9%)	287 (79.5%)	1 (0.3%)	12 (3.3%)	13 (3.6%)	361
UK	277 (73.7%)	5 (1.3%)	81 (21.5%)		4 (1.1%)	9 (2.4%)	376
Unknown	46 (31.9%)	3 (2.1%)	56 (38.9%)			39 (27.1%)	144
Total	364 (41.3%)	15 (1.7%)	424 (48.1%)	1 (0.1%)	16 (1.8%)	61 (6.9%)	881

Figure 1: The growing population of people in treatment for HIV (grey blocks) and the decreasing number of deaths (black line) in HIV positive people in the North West of England, 1996-2009



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