

1. HEALTH STATUS

1.13. AIDS incidence

The first cases of Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) were diagnosed almost 30 years ago. The onset of AIDS is normally caused as a result of HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) infection and can manifest itself as any number of different diseases, such as pneumonia and tuberculosis, as the immune system is no longer able to defend the body. There is a time lag between HIV infection, AIDS diagnosis and death due to HIV infection, which can be any number of years depending on the treatment administered. Despite worldwide research, there is no cure currently available.

In 2006, the number of reported new cases of AIDS stood at approximately 45 000 across the OECD area as a whole, representing an unweighted average incidence rate of 16.2 per million population (Figure 1.13.1). Since the first reporting of AIDS cases in the early 1980s, the number of cases rose rapidly to reach an average of more than 45 new cases per million population across OECD countries at its peak in the first half of the 1990s, almost three times current incidence rates (Figure 1.13.2). Public awareness campaigns contributed to steady declines in reported cases through the second half of the 1990s. In addition, the development and greater availability of antiretroviral drugs, which reduce or slow down the development of the disease, led to a sharp decrease in incidence between 1996 and 1997.

The United States has consistently shown the highest AIDS incidence rates among OECD countries, although it is important to note that the case reporting definitions were expanded in 1993 and subsequently differ from the definition used across Europe and other OECD countries. The change in definition also explains the large increase in cases in the United States in 1993 (Figure 1.13.2). In Europe, Spain reported the highest incidence rates in the first decade following the outbreak, although there has been a sharp decline since 1994, leaving Portugal currently with the highest rate among European countries. Central European countries such as the Czech and Slovak Republics and Hungary, along with Turkey, Korea and Japan report the lowest incidence rates of AIDS among OECD countries.

In the United States, over one million people are currently living with HIV/AIDS, including over 450 000 with AIDS (CDC, 2008). Almost three-quarters of new cases of AIDS diagnosed in 2006 were among men, and racial and ethnic minorities continue to be disproportionately affected by the epidemic. In Canada, Aboriginal people are over-represented. In most OECD countries, the main risk factor for HIV infection remains unprotected sex between men. Approximately 75% of heterosexually acquired HIV infection in western and central Europe is among migrants.

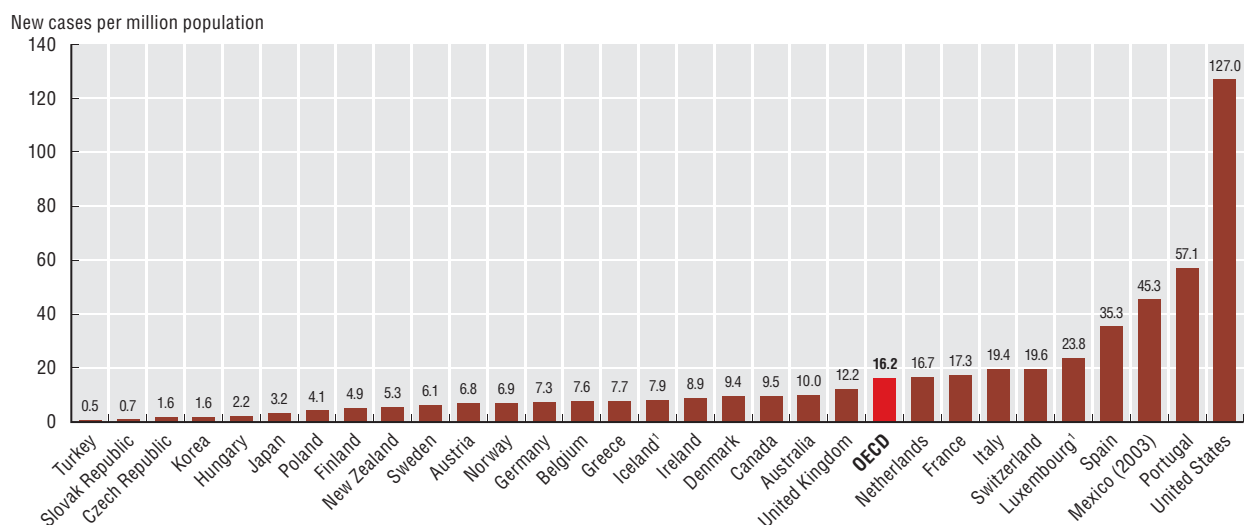
In recent years, the overall decline in AIDS cases has slowed down. This reversal has been accompanied by evidence of increasing transmission of HIV in several European countries (ECDC and WHO, 2008), attributed to complacency regarding the effectiveness of treatment and a waning of public awareness regarding drug use and sexual practice. Further inroads in AIDS incidence rates will require more intensive HIV prevention programmes that are focused and adapted to reach those most at risk of HIV infection (UNAIDS, 2008).

Definition and deviations

The incidence rate of AIDS is the number of new cases per million population at year of diagnosis. Note that data for recent years are provisional due to reporting delays, which sometimes can be for several years depending on the country.

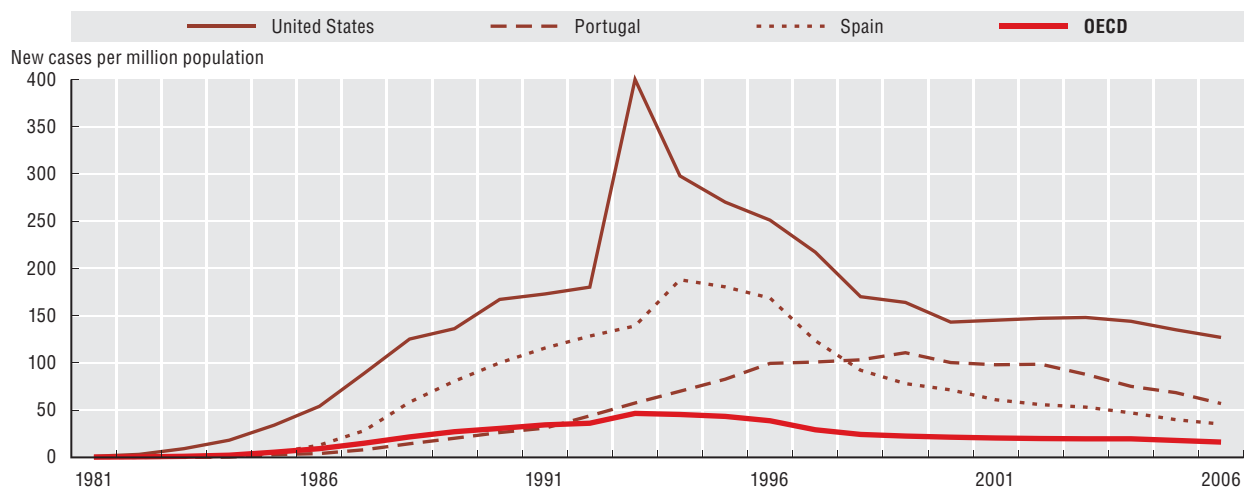
The United States expanded their AIDS surveillance case definition in 1993 to include T-lymphocyte count criteria. This broadening of the definition led to a large increase in the number of new cases in the United States in 1993 and explains some of the current variations in AIDS incidence between the United States and other OECD countries.

1.13.1 AIDS incidence rates, 2006



1. Three-year average (2004-06).

1.13.2 Trends in AIDS incidence rates, selected OECD countries, 1981-2006



Note: The United States expanded their AIDS surveillance case definition in 1993.

Source: OECD Health Data 2009. Data for European countries are extracted from the ECDC and WHO Regional Office for Europe (2008), "HIV/AIDS surveillance in Europe, 2007".

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/717661732382>



From:
Health at a Glance 2009
OECD Indicators

Access the complete publication at:
https://doi.org/10.1787/health_glance-2009-en

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2009), "AIDS incidence", in *Health at a Glance 2009: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.1787/health_glance-2009-15-en

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document and any map included herein are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

You can copy, download or print OECD content for your own use, and you can include excerpts from OECD publications, databases and multimedia products in your own documents, presentations, blogs, websites and teaching materials, provided that suitable acknowledgment of OECD as source and copyright owner is given. All requests for public or commercial use and translation rights should be submitted to rights@oecd.org. Requests for permission to photocopy portions of this material for public or commercial use shall be addressed directly to the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) at info@copyright.com or the Centre français d'exploitation du droit de copie (CFC) at contact@cfcopies.com.