

HIV/AIDS and Hispanic/Latino Youth



Background

Hispanic/Latino youth are at considerable risk for HIV.¹ On average, Hispanic/Latino adolescents engage in earlier age of sexual debut compared to non-Hispanic white adolescents and are less likely to use condoms consistently resulting in higher rates of unintentional pregnancy and heightened risk of contracting HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs).¹ Latino youth are also one of the fastest growing populations in the United States.² By 2060, the United States Census Bureau estimates that Latino youth will account for 38% of all youth under 18 years of age.² HIV/AIDS awareness, education, prevention, testing and treatment efforts are critical to the health and well being of Latino youth in the United States.

THE FACTS

- In 2013, an estimated 10,262 youth ages 24 years and younger were diagnosed with HIV in the United States and 6 dependent areas: **Hispanic/Latino youth represented 20% (2,045)** of the diagnoses compared to 17% (1,716) non-Hispanic white youth.³
- In 2013, an estimated 2,744 youth ages 24 years and younger were classified with Stage 3/AIDS in the United States and 6 dependent areas: Hispanic/Latino **youth represented 18% (490)** of the classifications compared to 11% (296) non-Hispanic white youth.³
- Among male adolescents and youth between the ages of 13 and 24 years living with a diagnosis of HIV infection year-end 2012 in the United States and 6 dependent areas, **20% (6,044) were Hispanic/Latino compared to 15% (4,533) non-Hispanic white**; among diagnosed female adolescent and youth in the same age range, **18% (1,874) were Hispanic/Latina** compared to 13% (1,354) non-Hispanic white.⁴

Risk Factors

- **Age:** Adolescence in and of itself is a risk factor, particularly for youth with an early age of sexual debut, and those with older sexual partners. Youth and adolescents are also at higher risk for STIs.⁵ STIs place an individual at greater risk for acquiring HIV.⁵⁻⁶
- **Low rates of condom use:** In a 2013 nationally-representative survey of youth in the United States (YRBS), of the 34.7% of Hispanic/Latino high school students reporting sexual intercourse in the previous 3 months, one-third (33.5%) of Hispanic/Latino males and nearly half (49.3%) of Hispanic/Latina females did not use a condom.⁷ Hispanic/Latino teens may be less knowledgeable, comfortable, and/or successful in condom negotiation and condom use self-efficacy compared to non-Hispanic white youth.⁸
- **Cultural Stressors:** Latino youth living in the United States are exposed to social and structural stressors, including discrimination and language barriers that make them more vulnerable to engaging in risky behaviors that increase the likelihood of becoming infected with HIV.⁹⁻¹⁰
- **Lack of Comprehensive and Medically-Accurate Sex Education:** State-by-state variation in mandated comprehensive and medically-accurate sexual health education within the public school system exists in the United States.¹¹ Furthermore, medical providers may be hesitant to discuss sex and sexuality with youth.¹¹
- **Lack of Communication with Parents/Adult Caregivers:** Parents in the United States often feel uncomfortable discussing sex with their children, and this may be more prevalent among Hispanic/Latino families depending on household educational attainment, income level, and years in the United States (if parents were born in another country or territory). Studies indicate that communication between teens and their parents is associated with delayed age at sexual debut, lower rates of sexual activity, less risky sexual behavior, and lower rates of teen pregnancy.¹¹⁻¹²
- **Social & Economic Factors:** Poverty, migration patterns, lower educational accomplishment, lack of health insurance or underinsurance and limited access to quality, culturally-responsive health care may contribute to HIV infection among Hispanics/Latinos, and heavily impacts youth. These factors may limit awareness about HIV infection risks and opportunities for counseling, testing, and treatment.¹³

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- ²United States Census Bureau. (n.d.). Table 10 - projections of the population by sex, Hispanic origin, and race for the United States: 2015 to 2060. 2014 National Population Projections: Summary Tables. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/population/projections/data/national/2014/summarytables.html>
- ³Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2015, February). HIV Surveillance Report, 2013; vol.25. Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/g-l/hiv_surveillance_report_vol_25.pdf
- ⁴Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2015, June 30). HIV among youth. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/group/age/youth/index.html>
- ⁵Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2014, December 16). 2013 sexually transmitted diseases surveillance – STDs in adolescents and young adults. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats13/adol.htm>
- ⁶Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2010, April). CDC fact sheet - the role of STD detection and treatment in HIV prevention. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/std/hiv/stds-and-hiv-fact-sheet-press.pdf>
- ⁷Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2014, June 13). Morbidity and mortality weekly report – surveillance summaries, youth risk behavior surveillance- United States, 2013, 64(4): 26. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss6304.pdf>
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- ¹¹Guttman Institute. Facts on American Teens' Sources of Information about Sex. February 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.guttman.org/pubs/FB-Teen-Sex-Ed.html>
- ¹²Martinez G, Abma J and Casey C. Educating teenagers about sex in the United States, NCHS Data Brief, 2010, No. 44.
- ¹³Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2015, July 8). HIV among Latinos. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/group/raciaethnic/hispaniclatinos/index.html>