

# HIV/AIDS among Hispanics/Latinos and Heterosexual Contact



## Background

People who identify as heterosexual, or “straight,” are romantically or sexually attracted to those of the opposite sex. The information provided below is in regards to adult and adolescent Latinos/Hispanics who report being sexually active with the opposite sex. Unless otherwise stated, all facts are inclusive of the United States and six dependant areas.

## THE FACTS<sup>1</sup>

- Across all races and ethnicities, **25.5% (12,216) of HIV diagnoses** in 2013 among adult or adolescents were attributed to heterosexual contact.
- Among adult or adolescent Hispanic/Latina females, heterosexual contact was reported as **86.3% of HIV diagnoses** in 2013. The second highest transmission category was injection drug use, reported at 13% (208).
- During 2013, 9% (849) of HIV diagnoses among Hispanic/Latino adolescent or adult males were reported under heterosexual contact.
- Among Hispanics/Latinos in the U.S., contracting HIV through heterosexual contact varies by place of birth. Hispanics/Latinos **born in the US** bear the greatest burden (31%; 687 cases of 2,238) compared to those born in **Puerto Rico** (16%; 367), **Mexico** (12%; 268), **Central America** (10%; 220), **South America** (4%; 86) or **Cuba** (3%; 66).

## Risk Factors

Heterosexual Hispanics/Latinos confront several obstacles when it comes to preventing HIV infection and seeking treatment once infected.

- **Sexually transmitted infections** (STIs) increase risk of HIV transmission. Surveillance data show higher rates of reported STIs among some racial or ethnic minority groups when compared with rates among whites. Race and ethnicity in the United States are population characteristics that also correlate with other fundamental determinants of health status.<sup>2</sup>
- Hispanic women may be unaware of their male partner’s sexual risk factors or incorrectly assess them.<sup>3</sup>
- **Acculturation** is an important factor in acquiring HIV/AIDS knowledge and condom use. According to a 2003 study conducted by Salabarria-Penna, et al., there is a positive correlation between women’s **condom use** and level of acculturation;<sup>4</sup> less acculturated Latinas were less likely to use condoms and more embarrassed to buy them.<sup>5</sup>
- For many Latinos, the **health of their family is a higher priority** than their personal health. This causes some women to focus on HIV/AIDS only when infection impacts the care of their family.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Note: Unless otherwise noted, all statistics represent data from the CDC’s HIV Surveillance Report of the United States and its six dependent areas from the year 2013, the year in which the most recent data is available. Citation information follows below.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2015, February). HIV Surveillance Report, 2013; vol.25. Retrieved from [http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/g-1/hiv\\_surveillance\\_report\\_vol\\_25.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/g-1/hiv_surveillance_report_vol_25.pdf)

<sup>2</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2013). STDs in Racial and Ethnic Minorities. <http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats13/minorities.htm>

<sup>3</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2013). HIV/AIDS Surveillance by Race/Ethnicity-Slideset, 2011. [http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/statistics\\_surveillance\\_women.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/statistics_surveillance_women.pdf) <http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats13/minorities.htm>

<sup>4</sup>Mendoza, Sofia. The Influence of Acculturation, Values and Relationship Power on Hispanic/Latina HIV Prevention

<sup>5</sup>Marin BV, Marin G. Acculturation differences in Hispanic condom use. Int Conf AIDS. 1990 Jun 20-23; 6: 105 (abstract no. S.C.37). UCSF Center for AIDS Prevention Studies, San Francisco, California, USA

<sup>6</sup>National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators (NHCSL), 2006. Healthy States Initiative: A Growing Concern: Hispanic/Hispanic/Latinas, HIV/AIDS and other STDs.