



Latino Young Adults and AIDS

HIV has had a severe impact on the Latino community. Although they only make up 13% of the United States population, Hispanics account for 20% of all new HIV cases. The numbers of Latinos living with HIV continues to grow, and many young people have high risks of contracting the disease. Among young adults between the ages of 20 and 24 years, Latinos accounted for 5% of new HIV cases from the beginning of the epidemic until June of 1998 (NPHRC 1999).

Cumulatively, 23, 729 AIDS cases in the 20 to 24 year old age group have been reported up through June of 1998 (NPHRC 1999). Of these, 5,043 have been Hispanics; Latinas accounted for 26% of these cases while males comprised 74% (NPHRC 1999). From the early 1980's through June of 1998, youth between the ages of 20 and 24 years accounted for 13,911 new HIV cases (NPHRC 1999). Of these, 663 have been Hispanic, with 14% female and 86% male (NPHRC 1999).

Unfortunately, these statistics only come from the 31 states that release confidential HIV reports (NPHRC 1999). Therefore, these numbers do not represent nearly half of the states in the U.S. Furthermore, the statistics do not extend beyond June of 1998. With the growing numbers of HIV in the United States, including among Latino young adults, one would expect more incidences of HIV infection to have occurred since the release of these statistics. HIV prevention programs must begin at an early age so that young people will be aware of the severe threat that HIV poses to their health and the future of their communities. Through quality education and outreach, we can help stop HIV from infecting our young adults, the next generation of leaders in our communities and in the nation.