



# HIV/AIDS

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## 1. Background Information

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) and AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) continue to be global health challenges. Since the onset of the pandemic, significant progress has been made in understanding, preventing, and treating the virus. However, the burden of HIV/AIDS disproportionately affects women worldwide. The UN Women Committee on HIV/AIDS plays a crucial role in addressing these disparities and advocating for gender-sensitive policies and interventions.

The UN Women Committee on HIV/AIDS is committed to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women in the context of HIV/AIDS. It focuses on raising awareness, advocating for policies that address the unique challenges faced by women, and fostering international cooperation to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS.

## 2. Challenges Faced by Women

### 2.1 Gender Disparities in HIV/AIDS

Women and girls account for more than half of all people living with HIV globally. They face higher vulnerability due to biological, social, and economic factors. Gender inequality contributes to the spread of HIV. It can increase infection rates, and reduce the ability of women and girls to cope with the epidemic. Often, they have less information about HIV and fewer resources to take preventive measures. They face barriers to the negotiation of safer sex, because of unequal power dynamics with men. Sexual violence, a widespread violation of women's rights, exacerbates the risk of HIV transmission. Evidence suggests that marriage can be a major risk factor, especially for young women and girls.

### 2.2 Violence and Stigma

Women living with HIV often face discrimination and violence, including intimate

partner violence and societal stigma, which makes them less likely to seek healthcare and disclose their HIV status. During the COVID pandemic, domestic violence has reached new heights and the lack of testing done due to quarantines as well as reduced prioritization has set many countries back.

### 2.3 Lack of Access to Healthcare

Limited access to healthcare services, especially in low-resource settings, hinders women's ability to get tested, receive treatment, and access preventative measures like PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis). Some countries however, like Cuba, are fighting this trend and are beating STDs such as Syphilis. It is of utmost importance to identify the nuance of your respective countries.

### 2.4 Mother-to-Child Transmission

Without proper access to prevention and treatment, many children are born with HIV. Vertical transmission of HIV remains a significant concern in countries with high prevalence rates. It is also the major reason why women specifically are so much more at risk from HIV/AIDS related issues, as they are also the ones oftentimes taking care of the AIDS infected children.

## 3. Progress Over the Years

### 3.1 Global Reduction in HIV Infections

Over the past decades, there has been a global trend of reducing new HIV infections, thanks to increased awareness, prevention programs, and advances in treatment.

### 3.2 Advancements in Treatment and Prevention

Medical advancements, such as antiretroviral therapy (ART) and PrEP, have greatly improved the quality of life for those living with HIV and reduced the risk of transmission.

### 3.3 Empowerment of Women

Efforts to empower women through education, economic opportunities, and gender

equality initiatives have contributed to reducing their vulnerability to HIV. UN Women brings gender equality and human rights perspectives to its work on women and HIV and AIDS. UN Women spearhead strategies that make clear links to factors propelling the epidemic, such as violence against women, denial of legal rights and women's limited participation in decision-making. In June 2012, UN Women became the 11th cosponsoring agency of UNAIDS, an important step towards ensuring that gender equality is at the heart of global action on HIV and AIDS.

## 4. Rising HIV Infections

### 4.1 Case Study: South Africa

Despite progress in many regions, South Africa continues to experience a high prevalence of

HIV/AIDS. Factors such as gender-based violence, limited access to healthcare in rural areas, and stigma contribute to the persistence of the epidemic.

#### Case Study: Russia

Russia has seen an alarming increase in HIV infections, particularly among women. Injection drug use, inadequate healthcare infrastructure, and limited access to prevention and treatment services are some of the challenges faced.

#### Case Study: India

India has made significant strides in addressing HIV/AIDS. However, certain states still struggle with rising infections among women due to social and cultural factors, such as early marriage and lack of awareness

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