

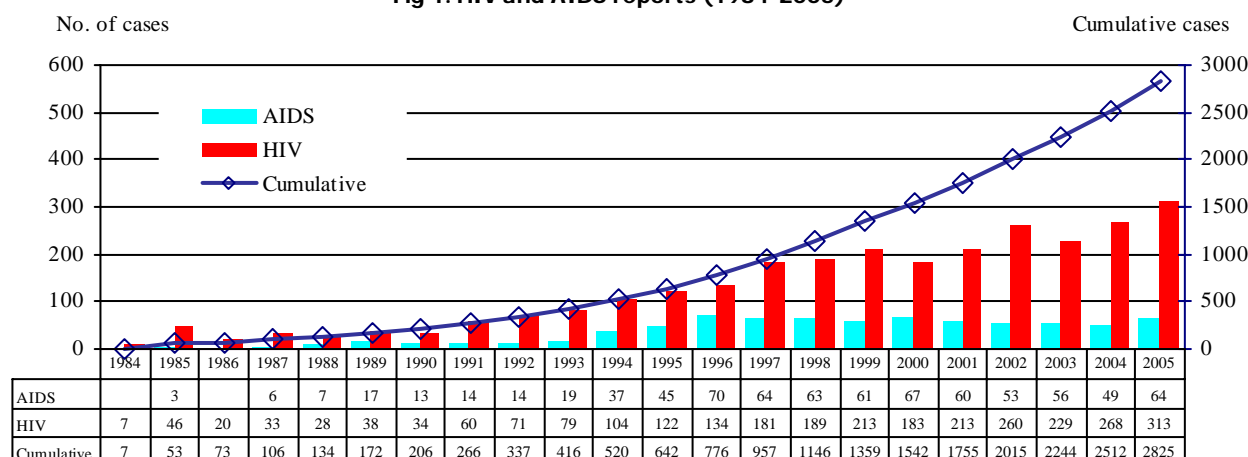
# HIV/AIDS Situation in Hong Kong [2005]

## Hong Kong is a low HIV prevalence area

The first case of HIV infection in Hong Kong was reported in 1984. Under the voluntary and anonymous HIV/AIDS reporting system, the Department of Health has received a total of 2825 reports of HIV infection at the end of 2005 (Fig. 1). The number of reports increased gradually every year and 313 new HIV reports were received in 2005. People with HIV infection develop into AIDS when they suffer from immunodeficiency due to HIV infection. There has been a decreasing trend in the number of AIDS reports received since 1996 and it is most likely contributed by the introduction of effective anti-retroviral treatment (HAART) at around the same time. Sixty-four new AIDS reports were received in 2005. The most common illnesses presenting at AIDS are *Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia* and *Tuberculosis*.

According to World Health Organization definition, the HIV prevalence in Hong Kong is low. It is estimated that there are about 3000 people living with HIV in the territory. The prevalence in adult population is estimated to be less than 0.1%, as determined in surveys of different populations.

Fig 1. HIV and AIDS reports (1984-2005)



\* AIDS cases are included in the HIV cases

## Most infections were in adult, men and Chinese

Majority of the HIV reports belonged to men and Chinese. In 2005, eight out of ten of the reports were men. Non-Chinese, who make up 5% of the Hong Kong population, accounted for 38% of the reported cases. Eight out of ten of the reports were from people aged between 20 and 49 (Fig.2-4).

Fig 2. HIV reports by gender (2005)

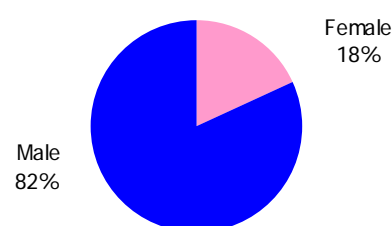


Fig 4. HIV reports by age group and gender (2005)

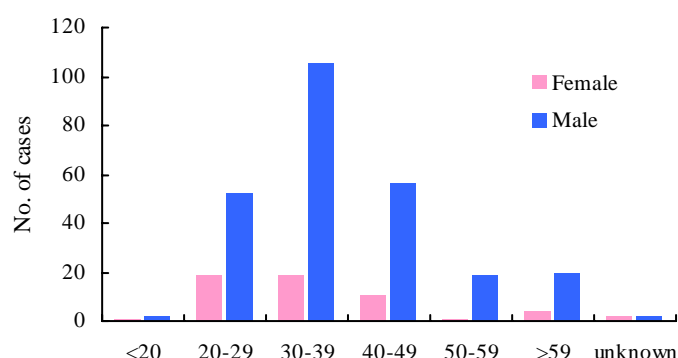
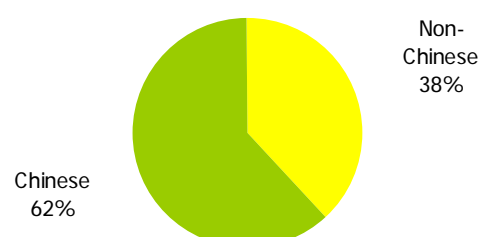


Fig 3. HIV reports by ethnicity (2005)



## Unprotected sexual contact is the main risk for HIV

The HIV epidemic in Hong Kong started off in a group of about seventy recipients of HIV infected blood or blood products diagnosed in the mid 1980s, and a few isolated cases believed to have contracted the virus outside Hong Kong. Afterwards, sexual contact has become the most important risk for HIV transmission. In the early years most infections occurred among men having sex with men (MSM), and since early 90s heterosexual transmission became the commonest category. A proportion of cases did not have risk ascertained due to inadequate information.

Fig 5. HIV risks in men (2005)

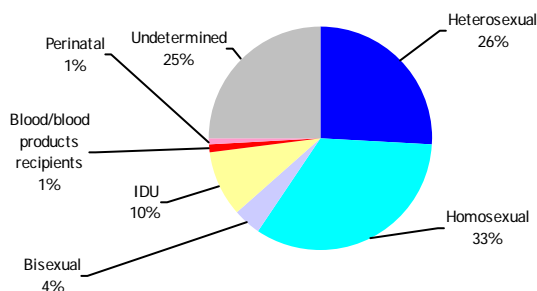
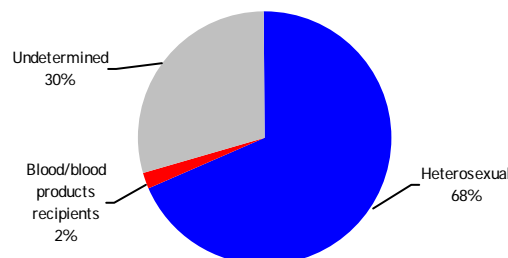


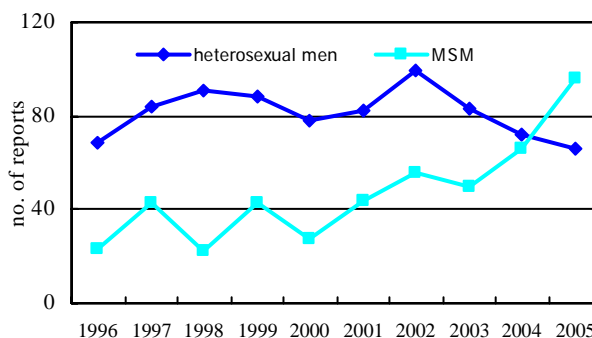
Fig 6. HIV risks in women (2005)



## Infections among men having sex with men continues to rise

In 2005, heterosexual transmission accounted for 34% of all HIV reports, one quarter of cases in men (Fig. 5) and 68% in women (Fig. 6). HIV infection among MSM is a particular cause for concern recently. Local studies have shown that about 2% of men aged 18-60 are sexually active MSM, but infections among them contributed to 31% of all HIV cases and 38% of that in men in 2005. The number of HIV reports from MSM was higher than that from heterosexual men for the first time in last decade

Fig 7. HIV reports in heterosexual men and MSM (1996-2005)



(Fig. 7). In the same year, of the almost 500 MSM tested for HIV at an AIDS organization, 2% were tested positive. An ongoing study on HIV-1 molecular epidemiology identified in 2005 a cluster of 20 infections which shared very similar gene sequence. Further investigations found that unprotected sex with men was the most important risk factor, indicating that on-going and intensified spread of HIV infections have occurred among the MSM population in Hong Kong.

Over the last 2 decades, infection among injecting drug users (IDU) only accounted for 3.4% of all HIV reports. The proportion increased to 8% in 2005 with an apparent increase after implementation of a universal testing programme in methadone clinics. The prevalence of HIV among drug users however remained at a low level of about 0.2% in the past few years.

Two perinatal HIV infections and 4 infections through transfusion of blood or blood product\* were reported in 2005.

- In every 100,000 units of blood donated at the HK Red Cross Transfusion Service, 2 of them was tested HIV positive (2005)
- In every 1,000 attendees at public sexually transmitted infection clinics, 1 of them was tested HIV positive (2005)
- In every 10,000 pregnant women receiving public antenatal service, 2 of them were tested HIV positive (2004)
- In every 1,000 drug users attending methadone clinics, 2 of them were tested HIV positive (2004)

\*One perinatal HIV infection was non-local. Two transfusion related infections were non-local and two others occurred before 1985 in Hong Kong.



Other publications on HIV/AIDS situation in Hong Kong

*Annual HIV Surveillance Report*

*Quarterly STD/AIDS Update*

Available at [www.aids.gov.hk](http://www.aids.gov.hk)

Please contact us for more information on HIV/AIDS in Hong Kong

**FACTSHEET (3) on HIV/AIDS Situation in Hong Kong [2005]**

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