

HIV/AIDS Among People Over Age 50: A Fact Sheet

New York City: •Older persons account for an increasing proportion of persons living with HIV/AIDS (PWA). Ten years ago, 12% of the 53,955 PWA in NYC were ages 50 and older. People 50 years of age and older now comprise 31% of the more than 95,000 PWA in NYC and the proportion is expected to continue to grow as new diagnoses decline and survival increases.

- The proportion of PWA ages 65 and older has tripled in the last ten years, from 1% in 1995 to 3% in 2005.

- Of the 4,078 new diagnoses of HIV citywide in 2001, 537 or 13% were in persons 50 and older. In 2005, of the 2,588 new HIV diagnoses citywide, only 366, or 14% were in persons 50 and older and only 1.5% in persons aged 65 and older.

- Ten years ago, 17% of citywide deaths in PWA occurred in persons 50 and older. That percentage grew to 35% by 2001 and 47% by 2005.

Nationally: •Through 2004, 14% of all reported HIV/AIDS cases in the United States were among people over age 50.

- From 1990 to 2001, the number of AIDS cases among people over age 50 increased more than fivefold, from 16,288 to 90,513 cases.

- Before 1985, 17% of older adult cases were caused by contaminated blood products.

- Heterosexual transmission of HIV is the leading mode of transmission among people over age 50, led in part by the availability of erectile dysfunction remedies.

- In 2003, 52% of older Americans living with HIV/AIDS were either Black or Hispanic.

Keep in Mind: •Older adults continue to be sexually active; they also are less likely to use protection because pregnancy is not an issue post menopause.

- Older adults continue to use drugs.

- Older adults who are exposed to HIV are at greater risk than younger people because of weakened immune systems.

- Health providers may not screen older adults for sexually transmitted diseases because of lack of training or ageist attitudes.

- Older adults are not diagnosed properly as having HIV/AIDS because many of the symptoms resemble the symptoms of old age.

Sources: NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; New York Association on HIV Over Fifty; AIDS Foundation of Chicago

