

The HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Seychelles

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The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate (the percent of people living with HIV/AIDS) in Seychelles remains fairly low, and significantly lower than other countries in sub-Saharan Africa.¹ Estimated HIV/AIDS prevalence in Seychelles was 0.2% as of the end of 2002, or less than 200 people.^{1,2} However, the prevalence rate has increased over time, and data indicate that HIV/AIDS may be more widespread in this middle-income country than previously thought.^{1,3,4,5} The Seychelles Government began its response to the epidemic shortly after the first case of HIV was diagnosed in 1987, with an initial short-term plan; the following year, an AIDS-IEC Committee was formed within the Ministry of Health. The National AIDS Council (NAC) was launched in 2002.^{4,6,7} The Government also created a National AIDS Trust Fund in 2002 to help mobilize resources and coordinate prevention and care efforts.^{4,8}

Figure 1: Percent of Adults Estimated to be Living with HIV/AIDS, 2003

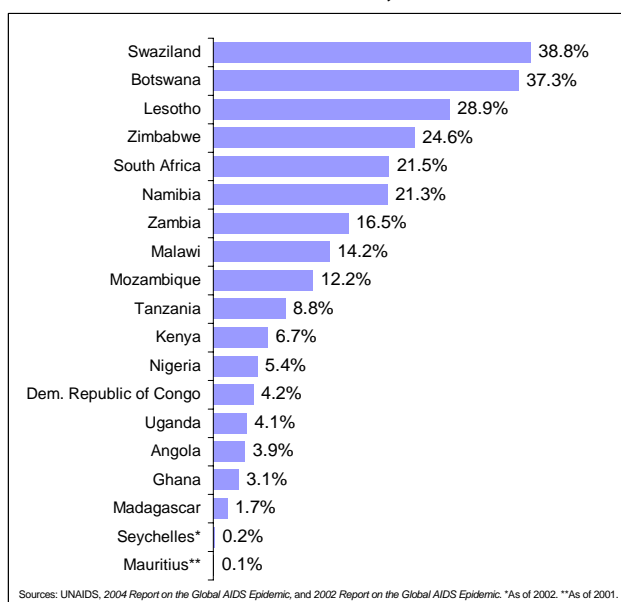
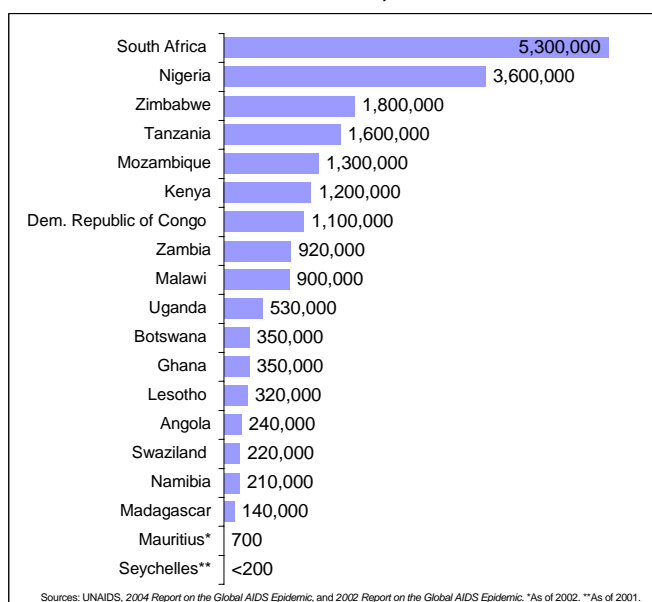


Figure 2: Number of People Estimated to be Living with HIV/AIDS, 2003



Overview

- The first HIV diagnosis in Seychelles was made in 1987, and the first case of AIDS was reported in 1992.^{4,7,9}
- The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate⁹ in Seychelles is quite low, estimated at less than 1% (0.2% in 2002), significantly lower than the prevalence rate of the sub-Saharan African region (7.5% in 2003) and the global rate (1.1% in 2003).^{1,11}
- As of the end of 2003, there were less than 200 people estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS in Seychelles.² However, recent data from the Seychelles Government indicate that the number may be on the rise.^{4,9}
- HIV is spread primarily through heterosexual sex in Seychelles.^{4,9}

Populations and Regions Affected

- Men still represent the majority of HIV/AIDS cases overall in Seychelles although among those between the ages of 15-19 and 25-29, women outnumber men.^{4,9}
- Most reported HIV cases in the country have been reported among 20-34 year olds, and analysis indicates that HIV prevalence among young people, ages 15-24, is higher than that of the general population.⁴
- As of the end of 2004, 51 people in the Seychelles had died from AIDS, half of whom were skilled workers and professionals.⁴

Other Key Data

- *Knowledge of HIV/AIDS:* A recent study of the Seychellois population found that general awareness of HIV/AIDS was high, with almost all (99%) of respondents having heard about HIV/AIDS. However, several misconceptions about HIV transmission and stigma remain.⁴
- *Access to Antiretroviral Therapy (ART):* ART has been provided free of charge in Seychelles since 2002.^{4,9} As of October 2004, an estimated 43 people were receiving ART in Seychelles,¹² almost 40% of those estimated to be in need of therapy.¹³

International Support/Major Donors

- France and India provide donor government bilateral support to Seychelles.⁴ Seychelles has designated its NAC as the Country Coordinating Mechanism for purposes of applying for funding from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.⁴
- UNAIDS and the UN Family support a variety of HIV/AIDS activities in Seychelles, including the Indian Ocean Partnership Initiative Against HIV/AIDS, a regional partnership which includes Seychelles, Mauritius, Madagascar, Comoros and Reunion Island.^{1,14}

Table 1: HIV/AIDS in Seychelles^{1,11,12,13}

Indicator	Seychelles	Sub-Saharan Africa	Global
Estimated number of people living with HIV/AIDS	<200 (2002 est.)	25 million (2003 est.)	37.8 million (2003 est.)
Percent of adult population estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS	0.2% (2002 est.)	7.5% (2003 est.)	1.1% (2003 est.)
Number of people estimated to be receiving antiretroviral therapy (ART), 2004	43 (Oct. 2004 est.)	310,000 (Dec. 2004 est.)	700,000 (Dec. 2004 est.)
Number of people estimated to be in need of ART, 2004	110 (Sept. 2004 est.)	4 million (Dec. 2004 est.)	5.8 million (Dec. 2004 est.)

Key Sources/Websites

- Republic of Seychelles, Ministry of Health, HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Program: www.moh.gov.sc/aids%20prevention%20and%20control.htm
- Republic of Seychelles, Ministry of Health, National AIDS Council: www.moh.gov.sc/nac.htm
- Republic of Seychelles, Ministry of Health, National AIDS Trust Fund: www.moh.gov.sc/natf.htm
- UNAIDS Seychelles Country Page: www.unaids.org/en/geographical+area/by+country/seychelles.asp
- World Health Organization, Seychelles Country Page: www.who.int/countries/syc/en/

References

- ¹ UNAIDS Seychelles Country Page: www.unaids.org/en/geographical+area/by+country/seychelles.asp.
- ² Based on the estimated 2003 adult population of the Republic of Seychelles. Source: World Bank World Development Indicators Database.
- ³ UNAIDS/WHO, "Seychelles: Epidemiological Fact Sheet on HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections – 2004 Update", www.unaids.org/html/pub/publications/fact-sheets01/Seychelles_en_pdf.pdf.
- ⁴ Republic of Seychelles, Ministry of Health, *National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan, 2005-2009 (Draft)*, 2005.
- ⁵ World Bank, "Country Classification: Country Groups": www.worldbank.org/data/countryclass/classgroups.htm#Low_Income.
- ⁶ Republic of Seychelles, Ministry of Health, National AIDS Council: www.moh.gov.sc/nac.htm.
- ⁷ UNAIDS, Seychelles: National Response Brief.
- ⁸ Republic of Seychelles, Ministry of Health, National AIDS Trust Fund: www.moh.gov.sc/natf.htm.
- ⁹ Republic of Seychelles, Ministry of Health, *Epidemiological Bulletin*, No. 8, November 2004.
- ¹⁰ Among adults ages 15-49.
- ¹¹ UNAIDS, *2004 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic*, July 2004.
- ¹² WHO, "3 x 5" *Progress Report*, December 2004.
- ¹³ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), Treatment Map: Seychelles: www.plusnews.org/aids/treatment/Seychelles.asp.
- ¹⁴ UNDP, "Ongoing HIV/AIDS Programme: Seychelles": http://un.intnet.mu/UNDP/html/seychelles/hiv_aidsey.htm.