

Hispanic/Latina Women and AIDS: A Critical Perspective

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ABSTRACT

According to the 1996 CDC HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report, the Centers for Disease Control reported 501,310 cases of AIDS in the United States as of October 1995. This number grew to 525,050 by December 1995. Fifty-one percent of the reported AIDS cases were among African-Americans and Hispanics/Latinos. These figures become more significant when compared to the national population breakdown. African-Americans represent 12.1% of the population while Hispanics/Latinos represent 9% of the population. From this growing group of victims, African-American and Hispanic/Latino women are disproportionately represented, and the disease is expected to spread at much higher rates among these groups. The best know prevention against AIDS at present is education. Therefore, this paper argues that men and women should be educated about how to protect themselves. Specifically, the primary routes of transmission of HIV infection in the United States are culturally structured social behaviors, particularly the sharing of intravenous drug injection equipment and sexual acts involving the exchange of body fluids. AIDS preventive education must include education about drug use as well, including the provision of clean needles or a means of cleaning them. Moreover, the government, at all levels, must also be held accountable for acceptable levels of commitment to and intervention in minority communities.