

## Statistics

In such a large and diverse country as South Africa, no-one can know exactly what the true figures are. There are limitations and variations in the different studies being conducted.

### **The South African National HIV Survey, 2005**

The National HIV Survey is a "household" survey. This involves sampling a proportional cross-section of society, including a large number of people from each geographical, racial and other social group. The researchers take great pains to try to make the sample as generalised as possible, and the findings are later adjusted to correct for likely over- or under-representation of individual groups (according to census data).

The survey's fieldworkers visited 12,581 households across South Africa, of which 10,584 (84%) took part in the survey. Of the 24,236 people within these households who were eligible to take part, 23,275 (96%) agreed to be interviewed and 15,851 (65%) agreed to take an HIV test. This means that only 55% of eligible people were tested.

The main reasons given for refusing HIV testing were:

- Fear of having a blood sample taken (58%)
- Religious objections to having a blood sample taken (16%)
- Not wanting to learn HIV status (7%).
- 13% of people who refused were, for various reasons, afraid or mistrustful of the survey.

The report of the survey claims that people at high risk for HIV infection were more likely to take part in the survey. The results were adjusted to compensate for this perceived bias.

The response rate is considered "good" by the standards of this type of survey, but is considerably lower than that found in other parts of sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>1</sup> White people and those of Indian origin were the least cooperative. Based on this survey, the researchers estimated at the time that :

- 10.8% of all South Africans over the age of 2 years were living with HIV in 2005.
- Among those between 15 and 49 years old, the estimated HIV prevalence was 16.2% in 2005.
- Among females, HIV prevalence is highest in those between 25 and 29 years old
- Among males, the peak is in the group aged 30-39 years.