

uncommon to see more than 5 percent of young men and women infected with chlamydia (Mertz, 1998). Rates of gonorrhea are highest in females 15 to 19 years of age.

Current STD trends in teens indicate that syphilis, hepatitis B, and chancroid are declining. Chlamydia is going down in areas where there is screening and treatment among teens at family planning clinics and school-based screening programs. In areas where these services are not available, the disease rate is increasing (CDC, 2001).

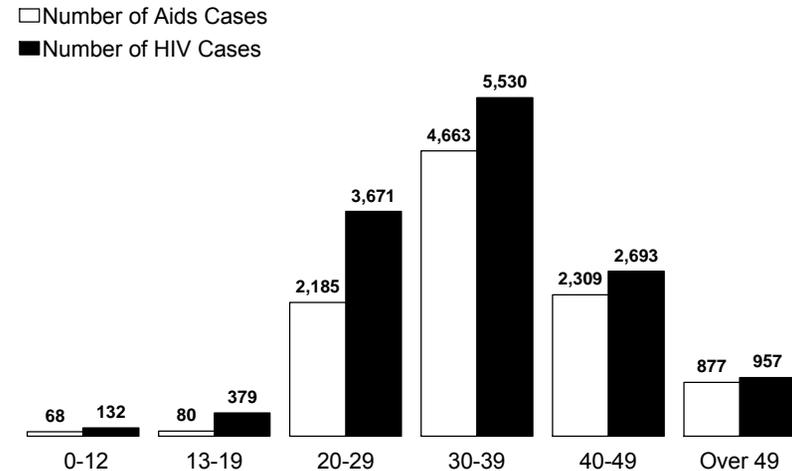
National surveillance data analyzed from 25 states with integrated HIV and AIDS reporting systems for the period between January 1996 and June 1999 indicate that young people ages 13 to 24 accounted for 13 percent of all HIV cases, and 3 percent of all AIDS cases. The data showed that even though the incidence of AIDS is declining, there has not been a comparable decline in the number of newly diagnosed HIV cases among youth (CDC, 2001). Scientists believe that cases of HIV infection diagnoses among 13- to 24-year-olds are indicative of an overall trend in HIV incidence due to the high risk behaviors in teens. Females made up nearly half (47 percent) of HIV cases in this age group, and young African-Americans are most heavily affected, accounting for 56 percent of all HIV cases reported among 13- to 24-year-olds (CDC, 2001).

CDC research illustrated that to improve STD prevention strategies for young people, clear communication between parents and young people about sex and maintaining protective sexual behaviors, in addition to a wide range of prevention activities in communities, is the only way to reduce the risk of HIV and AIDS.

Some of the recommended programs are:

- ✓ School-based programs to reach youth before behaviors are established are the most effective, with comprehensive programs that focus on delaying sexual behavior and that provide information on how sexually active young people can protect themselves.
- ✓ Outreach efforts to out-of-school youth by community-based programs.
- ✓ Sustained prevention efforts for young gay and bisexual men.
- ✓ Addressing sexual and drug-related risk. Many students report using alcohol and drugs when they have sex.
- ✓ Making STD diagnosis and treatment available to youth as part of a prevention strategy.
- ✓ Ongoing evaluation of factors influencing risk behavior (CDC, 2001).

Tennessee Reported Aids/HIV Cases 2001 By Age Group



Source: Tennessee Department of Health.