

Progress on Global Access to HIV Antiretroviral Therapy

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A new report by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) shows that the number of people on HIV antiretroviral treatment (ART) in low- and middle-income countries more than tripled to 1.3 million in December 2005 from 400 000 in December 2003. Charting the final progress of the "3 by 5" strategy to expand access to HIV therapy in the developing world, the report also says that the lessons learned in the last two years provide a foundation for global efforts now underway to provide universal access to HIV treatment by 2010. Progress in treatment scale-up, while substantial, was less than initially hoped. While the new report found no systematic bias against women in ART access, rates of coverage for women varied. In some countries, more women receive treatment; in others, more men. One notable area of concern is access to therapy to prevent mother-to-child HIV transmission, which remains unacceptably low. Between 2003 and 2005, fewer than 10% of HIV-positive pregnant women received antiretroviral prophylaxis before or during childbirth.

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