



Eye on the Web

LINKS TO THE RESOURCES ON THE INTERNET

HIV/AIDS Resources



While AIDS rates in Canada have declined over the past decade, high HIV infection rates continue to pose challenges for many communities. In addition, the global rate of infection continues to rise, with the United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS estimating that 40.3 million people were living with HIV in 2005, an increase of almost three million over two years. As the pandemic has spread, the need for, and availability of, access to reliable publicly available information has also increased. Individuals and organizations require access to information about prevention, treatment and support programs; students and researchers are interested in the history, epidemiology and sociopolitical ramifications of the pandemic at global, regional and local levels.

This column will outline some key, freely available HIV/AIDS Web resources, particularly for Canadian and global information. The sites listed focus on historical, epidemiological and policy information. Recognizing that this list provides only a brief overview, we've also listed three portals that provide access to other resources.

HISTORY / BACKGROUND

The Early Years of the AIDS Crisis: Disasters and Tragedies

(Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) http://archives.cbc.ca/IDD-1-70-413/disasters_tragedies/early_aids/

The CBC Archives provide a wonderful resource for historical research, especially for those interested in media responses to the disease. This particular Web site provides access to CBC television and radio programming from 1981 through 1987- covering key moments of the emerging HIV/AIDS crisis in Canada and around the world. These include the early outbreak of HIV, when it was considered a rare form of cancer, through political and religious marginalization of people with HIV, the advent of safer sex campaigns, and the period of rising intolerance and renewed interest in human rights in the late 1980s. For each segment, background information is included to provide context. This site is a key resource for researchers seeking Canadian primary documents addressing the early years of the AIDS crisis.

AIDS at 20 (New York Times)

<http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/science/aids/aids-index.html>

Assembled in 2001, AIDS at 20 is American in focus, but provides a broad overview of the history of the

pandemic. Included on the main page are articles that provide long-range historical perspectives of the disease. The "From the Archives" section (see links on the right-hand side) provides access to a significant selection of past NYT articles categorized by timeframe. Links to multimedia/video resources, in-depth reports and facts sheets from the NYT and other agencies cover many issues, including AIDS and women, basic science and medical aspects of HIV/AIDS, and personal accounts of people infected with and affected by the disease.

EPIDEMIOLOGY

Disease surveillance on-line

(Public Health Agency of Canada)
<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dsol-smed/index.html>

HIV/AIDS Epi Update

(Public Health Agency of Canada) <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/epiu-aepi/index.html>

Disease Surveillance On-line provides access to incidence data for various types of diseases in Canada. Selecting "Notifiable Diseases" allows users to retrieve data about AIDS for selected periods of time. Statistical breakdown by gender, province/territory, and age are available and output can be formulated as a map, table, or chart. HIV/AIDS Epi Update provides online access to epidemiological reports from 2003 forward. These

reports offer valuable analysis as they provide information about the incidence of infection among various demographic communities in Canada, including youth, aboriginals, injection drug users and women, among others. Yearly topics vary; however, for historical and projected trends of infection, including challenges facing various communities, this easily navigated Web site is useful for understanding the prevalence of the disease in Canada.

WHO Global Health Atlas

(World Health Organization)
<http://www.who.int/globalatlas>

Drawing on the WHO's Communicable Disease global database, this resource allows users to run statistical queries and build interactive maps for various communicable diseases, including HIV/AIDS. Demographic, socio-economic and environmental factors can also be mapped, allowing for a better understanding of the determinants affecting disease prevalence. The queries and mapping features are sophisticated and can be tricky to use. For many users, information provided in the Map Library and the Reports sections will be sufficient. Here, epidemiological reports for individual countries and existing maps outlining predefined criteria are available for downloading.

POLICY

Federal Initiative to Address HIV/AIDS in Canada

(Public Health Agency of Canada)
http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/aids-sida/hiv_aids/index.html

This Web site contains information and publications outlining the Government of Canada's strategy for addressing HIV/AIDS. The information provided is extensive and the site is frequently updated. A highlight includes the HIV/AIDS Communiqué, published 1-3 times per year, outlining current government responses to the evolving nature of HIV/AIDS in

Portals

The AIDS Infonet (New Mexico AIDS Education and Training Center, University of New Mexico) <http://www.aidsinfonet.org/>

Canadian HIV/AIDS Information Centre (Canadian Public Health Association) <http://www.aidssida.cpha.ca/>

HIV/AIDS Information on the Internet (AIDS Education Global Information System) <http://www.aegis.com>

Canada and globally. The site is very well organized with a menu providing access to key areas of concern (e.g., community development, human rights, prevention). It is a central resource for tracking the government's numerous initiatives and its relationships with partner agencies.

UNAIDS: The Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS

(United Nations)

<http://www.unaids.org/>

Established in 1994 by a United Nations Economic and Social Council resolution, UNAIDS draws on the resources of ten organizations within the UN family to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS and alleviate its impact. Its Web site brings together a significant amount of information on numerous

international facets of the disease. Broad subject groupings outline major UNAIDS declarations and projects including goals, policies, and specific regional concerns. Information presented is often brief with links provided to more in-depth publications and data sources.

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