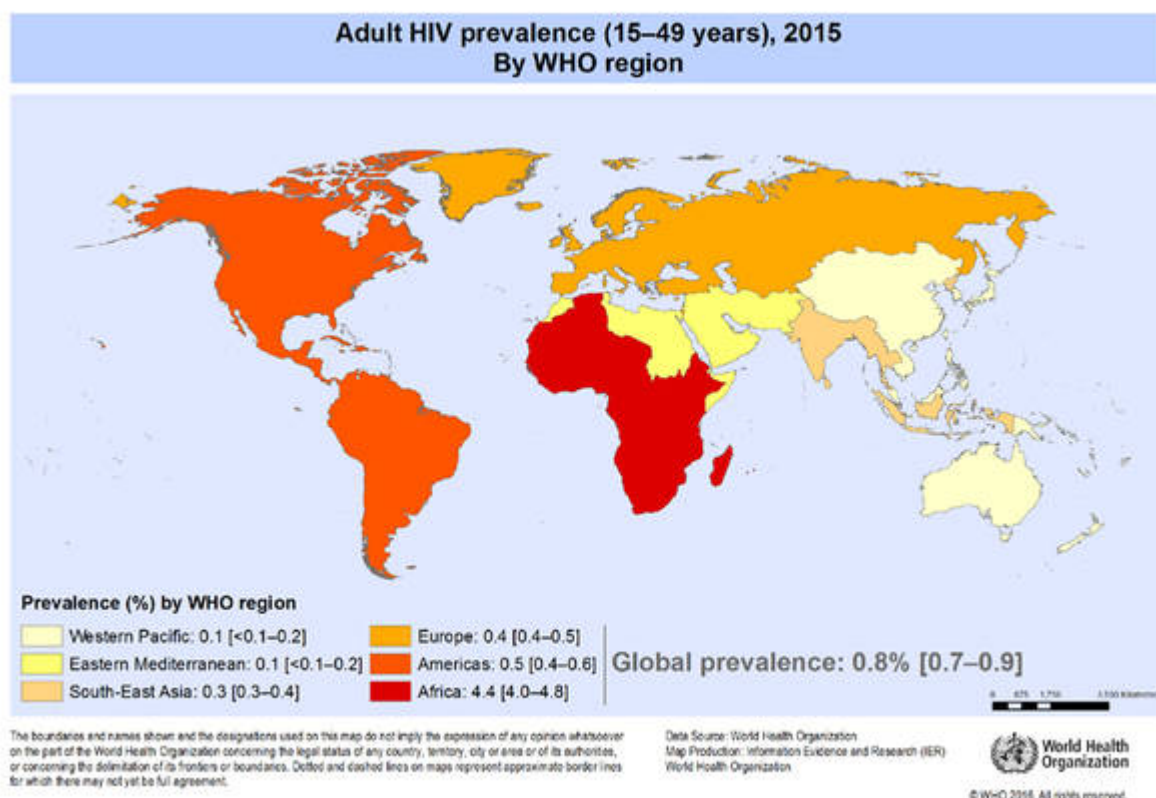


People are still getting AIDS: forty six new cases in 10 months

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There were 46 new AIDS cases recorded in the Varese area, in 2016. Between 1 January and 31 October, **three people aged between 0 and 20 years, 17 aged between 21 and 40 years, 20 aged between 41 and 60 years, and 2 over the age of 60** contracted the disease.

They were mostly Italians: 24, of whom 19 were men, and 18 foreigners, of whom 10 were women. Infection among **heterosexuals** was confirmed, with 37 cases, against 11 among homosexuals, and 3 among drug addicts and one bisexual.

In 15 years, **between 2000 and 2015, 435 people resident** in Varese Province contracted the disease, with a clear peak at the beginning of the century, and a falling curve since 2008. The year 2015 had the lowest number of sick people. **In these years, the age group most affected was between 35 and 39 years (64%).**

Last year, **there were 58 new diagnoses of HIV-infection**, a fall of 26% with respect to the previous year.

The **discovery** of having contracted the disease occurred **by chance** in a little less than one third of cases (26%). Conscious check-ups are still uncommon: 7% because the partner is HIV-positive, 7% following risky behaviour, 3% as a result of routine tests. In another 3% of cases, a woman discovered she had the disease during a pregnancy check-up.

Italy is 13th in terms of the incidence of new HIV diagnoses among EU nations. Last year, 3444 new cases were reported, a slight fall with respect to the previous three years. **Lombardy is among the Italian regions with the highest incidence**, together with Lazio, Liguria and Emilia Romagna.

So, although the emergency over the spread has been called off, the social warnings have not. Appeals, information and awareness campaigns have helped, but they are unable to stop risky behaviours entirely.

So, 1 December maintains its significance, from the points of view of communication and, more concretely, of control.

On Thursday, 1 December, the local health authority, ATS Insubria, is organising a day of free testing. “Let’s not let your guard down” is the slogan chosen to remind people of the importance of safe behaviour. Saliva tests will be carried out, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. in the STD (sexually transmitted diseases) clinic. If the result of the test is **reactive or positive**, it means there are **antibodies against HIV present in the saliva**, which may indicate the presence of HIV infection. **A blood test is then required** to diagnose the infection, **using the ELISA and Western Blot methods**.

The test is recommended for everyone who engages in behaviours that may lead to their contracting a sexually transmitted disease. Early diagnosis makes it possible to contain the infection, with a timely beginning of the effective therapies that are currently available.

The tests will be carried out by the Department of Preventive Medicine in the **Biffi Ward – Via O. Rossi, 9 – Varese**

Call Freephone 800 012 080 – Monday to Friday – from 9 a.m. to midday.

di Translated by Bonomi & Romagnoni (Reviewed by Prof. Rolf Cook)