

《同性恋性行为给青少年带来HIV威胁》

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More targeted approaches are needed to fight the increasing threat of HIV/AIDS among Chinese students aged 15 to 24, a senior health official said.

"To contain the spread of HIV among youths, more forceful and targeted approaches are urgently needed, such as large-scale screening projects — like the one being carried out in Henan province — as well as high-profile peer education," Wu Zunyou, director of the National Center for AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Disease Control and Prevention, told China Daily.

"Securing sufferers' privacy and rights also remains key," he said.

Last year, more than 1,600 students aged 15 to 24 were diagnosed with HIV/AIDS, accounting for 1.8 percent of the cases detected that year, the latest figures from a nationwide health surveillance network showed.

The number stood at 482 in 2008, which was 0.9 percent of the yearly total.

"The epidemic has been striking these young students particularly hard in recent years," Wu said.

Epidemiological studies found that gay sex was a leading cause for the increase among the group, he said.

Among the infected students, 95.8 percent were males infected "mainly via gay sex transmission", he said.

In 2012, nearly 74 percent of male student sufferers detected were infected by male sexual partners. The figure was 58.5 percent in 2008.

Among the non-student youths infected, males accounted for nearly 72 percent, much lower than that among their student peers.

In 2012, more than half of the newly diagnosed cases among non-student youths were infected by the virus via unsafe heterosexual acts.

HIV screening and other services to deal with the disease among the students remain insufficient, Wu said.

The head of an AIDS control organization that targets men having sex with men agreed and added: "That's particularly true for minors.

"To avoid any legal risks, we have had to turn down minors who come to us for HIV screening services unless they are accompanied by parents," said the man, who didn't want to be identified.

Gottfried Hirnschall, director of the HIV/AIDS department of the World Health Organization, said, "Adolescents need health services as well, tailored to their needs. They are less likely than adults to be screened for HIV."

An AIDS doctor surnamed Xu in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, cited his own work experience to highlight the challenges.

"I've seen more students, even middle school ones, contracting HIV. A majority of them are gay and reported having unprotected gay sex," he said.

Without intervention, "it's only a matter of time for HIV to spread widely on college campuses", he said.

Xu said the recent move by Henan authorities for freshmen to be tested on a voluntary basis "helps raise HIV/AIDS awareness substantially".

"It works much better than teachers lecturing students on the issue."

Wu said improving students' access to HIV screening and prevention is crucial in curbing the spread of HIV among the group.

Last year, about 110 million HIV tests were conducted, resulting in 90,000 diagnoses, he said.

about 22,000 AIDS-related deaths were reported in 2013, official statistics showed. Nearly half were diagnosed the same year.