

China AIDS death toll up nearly 20,000 in a year: report

29 November 2010

The total number of reported AIDS deaths in China has jumped by nearly 20,000 since an official estimate last year, state media said Monday.

Deaths linked to Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) since its emergence in China in the 1980s reached 68,315 by the end of October, state television said, citing figures from the health ministry.

That compares with a tally of 49,845 reported deaths released by the ministry at the end of October 2009.

The number of reported HIV/AIDS sufferers stood at 370,393, the brief report by China Central Television said, compared with a ministry figure last year of 319,877.

World AIDS Day is on December 1.

HIV/AIDS was mostly sexually transmitted, with rates of infection among homosexual men increasing sharply, the report said.

It did not give a reason for the sharp rise in death and infection figures, but the government has been making efforts to improve reporting of cases.

The health ministry has previously also given a parallel estimate of 740,000 people "living with HIV/AIDS" in China since 1985 when it was first detected in the country. This apparently includes estimates of unreported cases.

AIDS has long had a heavy stigma attached to it in China, with many sufferers hiding their condition out of shame.

However, there have been recent signs that attitudes are changing.

The government has started talking more openly

about [HIV prevention](#) and control in [China](#), though people with HIV/AIDS still encounter huge discrimination in employment, education and healthcare.

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APA citation: China AIDS death toll up nearly 20,000 in a year: report (2010, November 29) retrieved 2 September 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2010-11-china-aids-death-toll-year.html>

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