



FIGO

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION
OF
GYNECOLOGY & OBSTETRICS

FIGO reaffirms commitment: World AIDS Day (1 December 2013)

On 1 December 2013, FIGO reaffirms its commitment to highlighting *World AIDS Day*, an international day raising awareness about HIV and AIDS globally.

Between 2011-2015, World AIDS Days have the theme of 'Getting to Zero: Zero new HIV infections. Zero discrimination. Zero AIDS-related deaths'.

The numbers affected

The latest statistics of the global HIV and AIDS epidemic were published by UNAIDS, WHO and UNICEF in December 2012, and refer to the end of 2011:

	Estimate	Range
People living with HIV/AIDS in 2011	34 million	31.4-35.9 million
Proportion of adults living with HIV/AIDS In 2011 who were women (%)	50	48-53
Children living with HIV/AIDS in 2011	3.3 million	3.1-3.8 million
People newly infected with HIV in 2011	2.5 million	2.2-2.8 million
Children newly infected with HIV in 2011	330,000	280,000- 390,000
AIDS deaths in 2011	1.7 million	1.5-1.9 million

HIV and AIDS affect women to a significant degree - the proportion of adults living with HIV/AIDS in 2011 who were women is estimated at 50 per cent. Women are more vulnerable to HIV infection - biologically, they are more likely to become infected by HIV through unprotected heterosexual intercourse than men, less likely to negotiate condom use, and more likely to experience non-consensual sexual relations.

FIGO's work with adolescent sexual and reproductive health, in particular, also highlights other important issues connected to HIV - for example, HIV testing is rare among adolescents, despite the knowledge available. It is essential for young women to have the means to protect themselves, for example, protection from gender-based violence, access to condoms and treatment for STIs etc.

Women also have to contend with issues surrounding mother-to-child transmission of HIV - many do not have adequate access to drugs to lessen the chances of their unborn children contracting HIV.

FIGO's goals are, among others, to promote condom-use as a necessary preventative measure; to educate and support HIV-positive new mothers in the area of 'replacement-feeding'; to focus on PMTCT (Prevention of Mother-To-Child Transmission); to improve access to anti-retroviral drugs; and to promote women-centred health care. More generally, FIGO works to help end gender-based violence and the stigma of HIV and HIV-testing through improving education, both in and out of schools, and to help encourage women's financial independence.

Professor Sir Sabaratnam Arulkumaran, FIGO President, said: 'At FIGO's World Congress in Rome last October, it was delighted to consolidate its long established relationship with UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, a programme that leads and inspires the world in achieving universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. FIGO is seen as a crucial partner in the response to the AIDS epidemic, as it has the credibility to ensure that basic human rights are an integral part of health services and in securing the future of women and children's health.'

Professional organisations can play an extremely important role at the community level, influencing and guiding communities. This is particularly critical in such sensitive areas as HIV prevention and treatment. Women living under the burden of HIV need to access adequate health care services; they also need to receive a high standard of care and attention from health care providers. Providers in turn need to ensure their training systems are robust, and cover such areas as non-discrimination, informed consent, and confidentiality.

Sources:

<http://www.avert.org/worldstats.htm>

<http://www.avert.org/women-hiv-aids.htm>