

# Prevalence and Determinants of HIV infection in South Africa: Results from the 2008 National HIV survey

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## Abstract

The HIV epidemic has emerged as a health concern, with the highest prevalence in Sub-Saharan Africa. In South Africa particularly, HIV has been the subject of much debate regarding the largest number of people living with HIV. It is essential to understand the social determinants of HIV prevalence in South Africa for informing policy makers to combat the disease. This paper presents the risk factors such as social, cultural and behavioural determinants of HIV prevalence in South Africa. A cross-sectional national population-based household survey was conducted using a multi-stage stratified sampling approach in 2008. All people living in South African households were eligible to participate. Dried blood spots specimens were collected by finger-prick (or heel-prick in infants) and tested for HIV antibodies to determine the prevalence and incidence of HIV infection. Findings demonstrate that Africans (0 yrs and above) had the highest prevalence of HIV infection of 13.2%, followed by Coloureds at 1.9% and Whites and Indians with the lowest prevalence of less than 0.5%. The risk of HIV was significantly higher among those sexually active in the past twelve months compared to those who were secondary abstainers. Also, The results presented in this paper demonstrate the extent to which HIV prevalence varies across demographic, socio-economic and behavioural factors. The differences in HIV prevalence between age groups call for formulation of interventions that are specific to each group.

## Keywords

HIV prevalence, determinants, demographic, sexual behaviour, South Africa