



California Drug Counseling

U.N. Report: More than 40 Million HIV-Positive

More than 40 million people worldwide are now infected with the AIDS virus, a record 1 million of them in the USA, the United Nations said in its latest report.

The number of HIV-positive people nationwide, which hovered at about 900,000 for years, has grown partly because more people get life-saving drugs and partly because the government has failed to reach its long-stated goal of cutting new infections in half, the report says, citing 2003 U.S. statistics, the latest available.

Roughly 40,000 people in the United States are infected each year, nearly half of them African-American. About 18,000 people die. Worldwide, AIDS has killed about 25 million people since it emerged in the early 1980s, 3.1 million of them last year alone. Nearly 5 million people were infected last year, according to the report. Nearly two-thirds of new infections, 3 million, were in sub-Saharan Africa.

Steep increases were seen in Russia, India, China, Pakistan and Indonesia, says Karen Stannecki, a demographer and adviser to the Joint United Nations AIDS Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), which released the report with the World Health Organization.

The epidemic's growth masked lower infection rates in Zimbabwe, Kenya, Burkina Faso and some Caribbean countries, along with gains in HIV testing and condom use, the report says. Zimbabwe's drop from an infection rate of 26% in 2003 to 21% in 2004 surprised experts because political strife left the country a shambles.

Paul De Lay of UNAIDS acknowledged Zimbabwe's surprising drop and credited it not to the government, but to a grassroots effort that boosted condom use and discouraged casual sex. The nation's high AIDS death rate also played a role, he

Continued on page 2, see 40 Million HIV-Positive

Push to Address Alcohol Problems Outside Rehab

When was the last time your doctor asked you about your drinking habits? Chances are he or she has never brought up the topic, which doesn't sit well with a group of doctors who think it's high time that drinking and drinking problems were addressed routinely in mainstream medical practice rather than solely in specialized treatment centers.

According to Dr. William R. Miller, the doctor's office is a good place to address alcohol problems, because people with alcohol problems often say "no thank you" when referred to rehab, but may ac-

cept help or at least talk about their drinking with their primary care doctor.

Only a small minority of people with alcohol disorders enter specialized treatment centers; most are seen in regular health care settings or social services, yet alcohol problems are seldom screened for or systematically addressed in these settings, Miller and colleagues note in February issue of *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*.

Miller, a professor of psychology and
Continued on page 3, see Address Alcohol Problems

Inside this issue:

U.N. Report: More than 40 Million HIV-Positive	1
Push to Address Alcohol Problems Outside Rehab	1
In N.H., a Beer in the Belly Can Get Youths Arrested	2

Special points of interest:

- Worldwide, AIDS has killed about 25 million people since it emerged in the early 1980s, 3.1 million of them last year alone.
- Most people who drink too much don't think they have a problem.

In N.H., a Beer in the Belly Can Get Youths Arrested

DURHAM, N.H. -- The alcohol that got Julia Zukerman into trouble with the law wasn't in her hand or in the front seat of her car. In fact, she wasn't drinking or driving -- just walking -- when a police officer told her to "blow a kiss in my face" and smelled her breath for booze.

"I thought I was fine, because I didn't have anything on me," said Zukerman, 19, waiting for her case to be called one recent morning in the courthouse of this college town. "Apparently not."

The alcohol they were interested in was already inside her body.

That's the way the law works now in New Hampshire, where minors can be arrested for what is colloquially called "internal possession" of alcohol, to the point of being intoxicated. In a break with legal tradition, an underage person with drinks in his or her system often faces the same charge as one with a drink in hand.

Similar statutes are now on the books in a handful of other states. Together, they've taken the campaign against underage drinking to a place it has rarely been before: down the gullet and into the bloodstream of teenage imbibers. But they have also spawned criticism from some legal scholars, who say the laws are pushing the definition of a real possession charge.

"When the law makes the offense simply a biological fact, of simply having a certain chemical in one's body, that steps

over a line in the law that has been traditionally accepted," said Richard J. Bonnie, a law professor at the University of Virginia who has studied underage drinking.

At first glance, new prohibitions related to underage drinking might seem redundant. After all, every state has some kind of ban on possession of alcohol by those younger than 21, and most also have laws against alcohol consumption by youths. And how could a teenager get alcohol into his stomach without having possessed or consumed it first?

But, here in New Hampshire, police say it's not that simple.

In the old days, they say, the teenagers at a party would drop their drinks and run when officers arrived. That would leave police with few of the particulars -- who drank what, and when -- necessary to build a legal case.

"You couldn't charge them with anything," said Eddie Edwards, the state's chief of liquor law enforcement. "There's no deterrent."

Then, in 2002, the state legislature expanded the old underage-possession statute to apply to those "intoxicated by consumption of an alcoholic beverage." The offense is on the same level as a traffic violation, but carries a \$300 fine and the possible loss of a driver's license.

Under the new law, police didn't have to establish when and

Continued on page 3, see Beer in the Belly

40 Million HIV-Positive

Continued from page 1
says.

Kenya's director of AIDS control, Ibrahim Mohamed, linked the decline in his country's HIV rate — from 10% of the population in the 1990s to 7% in 2003 — to teens who wait a year longer to have sex, men who have fewer sex partners and increased condom use.

Mark Dybul, deputy coordinator of President Bush's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, says, "The exciting thing we've seen in some countries in Africa is that you can change behavior." The United States helped fund the Kenyan program.

Richard Feachem, director of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, says that despite limited successes,

HIV-control efforts are underfunded. International donors supply roughly \$5 billion of the \$20 billion needed annually for AIDS programs. The United States gave \$3 billion.

Only one in five people at risk have access to prevention services. Just 1 million HIV patients worldwide get treatment, one-third of the goal set by the World Health Organization for this year, the report states. The United States has exceeded its goal of treating 200,000 by this year, Dybul says.

Feachem says donor countries must do more. "We managed to save 300,000 lives, but 3 million died," he says. "We have a long way to go, as the report clearly shows."

Worldwide, AIDS has killed about 25 million people since it emerged in the early 1980s, 3.1 million of them last year alone.

*SOURCE: USA TODAY
By: Steve Sternberg*

Address Alcohol Problems

Continued from page 1

psychiatry at the University of New Mexico, believes screening and intervention for alcohol problems during routine office visits can be especially effective for individuals with mild-to-moderate alcohol problems noting that most people who drink too much don't think they have a problem.

For people who wonder whether they drink too much, Miller suggests taking the "drinker's check-up," available online at www.behaviortherapy.com.

In several studies, Miller and colleagues offered the drinker's check-up to people who wondered if they were drinking too much and "100 percent of those who took it were, in fact, drinking to a harmful extent, and most of them substantially

reduced their alcohol use after the check-up," Miller said.

"The bottom line is if you wonder whether you drink too much, you probably do."

What constitutes "too much" drinking? According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) guidelines, women should have no more than one standard drink per day and men should have no more than two per day. A standard drink is about 10 ounces of beer, 4 ounces of wine, or 1 ounce of spirits.

SOURCE: Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research, February 2006.

Beer in the Belly

Continued from page 2

how a minor had become intoxicated. They needed only to determine that the minor was intoxicated, with the alcohol inside them.

"It's just like looking for someone who's a drunk driver," said Sgt. Kevin Kincaid of the Manchester police. The clues might be a stumbling walk, glassy eyes, an odor of alcohol or a blood alcohol concentration of .02, police say.

Now, according to the judge who oversees New Hampshire's district courts, about half of the state's 6,000 cases of under-age-possession in a typical year involve intoxication, not possession in the traditional sense.

But as common as it has become, the law has not lost its capacity to surprise.

"I really had no idea you could get arrested for that," said Chris Cormio, 20, a Massachusetts native now attending Plymouth State University in New Hampshire. Last February, he drank two beers, then set out on foot for a police station to bail out a friend. Cormio said he had brushed his teeth to get rid of the alcohol smell, but an officer noticed something amiss.

"Where I'm from," Cormio said, "they take you home when that happens to you."

So far, such laws remain relatively uncommon.

But that's starting to change: In Virginia, a 2003 bill allowed minors to be prosecuted for showing "physical indicia of consumption of alcohol," whether or not a container of booze is

present. Alcohol laws with similar intent have also been enacted in Vermont, Arizona, Utah and Missouri, where legislators approved a new "possession by consumption" statute last summer.

South Dakota has applied the same logic to drug use, targeting controlled substances that are already "absorbed into the human body."

Here in New Hampshire, some legislators are trying to make the law stricter. If their bill passes, police would no longer have to determine whether a young person has drunk enough to be intoxicated -- any alcohol consumption at all would be enough for a charge.

Defense attorneys and some legal experts have objected to this kind of thinking, questioning how anyone could be convicted of "possessing" something that an officer cannot see.

They say laws such as New Hampshire's, which target intoxication, are problematic because an act must be voluntary to be illegal.

That's certainly the case with getting drunk -- drinkers choose to hoist a beer to their lips.

But, the lawyers ask, is the same true of being drunk, meaning the processes that occur once the alcohol is in the bloodstream.

"Intoxication is an involuntary act," said Gabriel Nizetic, a Plymouth defense attorney. "Your body's going to absorb it, whether you want to or not."

Continued on page 4, see Beer in the Belly



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California Drug Counseling education and counseling center provides a variety of services including behavior modification, HIV/AIDS prevention and Medical drug/alcohol counseling, Prop 36 counseling, tutoring, mentoring, sex education counseling, parenting and other counseling services.

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*The Fresh Start office provides
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assistance for ex-offenders.*

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Beer in the Belly

Continued from page 3

The difficulties of carrying out the current law were apparent one recent morning here in Durham District Court, where several defendants were from the nearby University of New Hampshire. Often, these cases sounded less like by-the-book trial proceedings and more like a set of worried parents, parsing the words and actions of a possibly drunk kid.

"The defendant responded, 'I don't know, I guess I had too much to drink,'" a university police officer testified in one case, recounting a late-night conversation in a dorm room where no alcohol was visible. He said the freshman defendant, 18, also seemed to forget his own age and spoke with "a thick tongue."

"Did you ask him if he had taken any illegal drugs?" Joanne Stella, the defense attorney, asked the officer, trying to intro-

duce doubt that alcohol was behind his behavior. No, the officer replied.

Still, the student was found guilty. "What else could he have meant by, 'I've had too much to drink'?" Judge Gerald Taube asked.

In the next case, an officer testified that the defendant, whom he approached on a roadside late at night, "was swaying. Her eyes were bloodshot and glassy."

But, though the officer said he smelled alcohol, on cross-examination he said he wasn't sure whether he had asked the girl whether she had been drinking.

The girl got off, just as Zukerman did later the same day. But, in his ruling on her case, Taube said he was conflicted: "It's close to the line," he said.

*SOURCE: The Washington Post
By: David A. Fahrenthold*