

# SANKOFA FACT SHEET

March 2006

No. 8

## HIV/AIDS among African-American Women

In 2001, HIV infection was the leading cause of death for African-American women ages 25-34 and was among the four leading causes of death for African-American women ages 20-24 and 35-44 [1].

### STATISTICS

#### **Cumulative Effects of HIV Infection and AIDS (through 2003)**

Through 2003, 170,679 women were given a diagnosis of AIDS, a number that represents about one-fifth of the total 929,985 AIDS diagnoses [2].

#### **AIDS in 2003**

The rate of AIDS diagnoses for African-American women (50.2/100,000 women) was approximately 25 times the rate for white women (2.0/100,000) and four times the rate for Hispanic women (12.4/100,000) [2].

African-American and Hispanic women together represented 25 percent of all U. S. women [3], yet they account for 83 percent of the AIDS diagnoses reported in 2003 [2].

### RISK FACTORS AND BARRIERS TO PREVENTION

#### **Young Age**

According to a 1998 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) study of Job Corps entrants ages 16-21, HIV prevalence among young women (2.8 per 1,000) was higher than among young men (2.0 per 1,000). African-American women in the study were seven times as likely as white women and eight times as likely as Hispanic women to be HIV-positive [4].

#### **Lack of Recognition of Partners' Risk**

Some women may be unaware of their male partners' risk for HIV infection (such as unprotected sex with multiple partners, sex with men, or injection drug use) [5]. Men who engage in sex with both men and women can acquire HIV from a male partner and can then transmit the virus to female partners. In a recent study of HIV-infected people (5,156 men and 3,139 women), 34 percent of African-American men who have sex with men (MSM) reported having had sex with women. However, their female partners may not know of their bisexual activity: only 6 percent of African-American women in this study acknowledged having a bisexual partner [6].

#### **Sexual Inequality in Relationships with Men**

In one CDC study of urban high schools, more than one-third of African-American female teenagers had their first sexual encounter with an older man [7]. These teenagers, compared with teenagers whose partners were also teenagers, were younger at first sexual intercourse, were less likely to have used a condom during first and most recently reported intercourse, or were less likely to have used condoms consistently.

- References:
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Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pubs/facts/women.htm>

