

Introduction and background

Grenada is the Southernmost of the chain of islands that make up the Eastern Caribbean. It is an English speaking country which consists of the mainland and its two dependencies, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Together the islands make up 133 sq. miles of land. According to the 2011 census, Grenada's population now stands at just over 103,000 with slightly more males than females. The census also reveals that over 60% of the population is under the age of 35.

The ethnicity of Grenada is predominantly of African decent with an increasing number of East Indians and Asians. It is considered a Christian country with Catholic being the most influential denomination.

Grenada recorded its first case of **HIV** in 1984 and now has a cumulative total of 464 cases as at the end of 2011. The cumulative number of **AIDS** for the same period is 303 (65.3% of the HIV cases). The cumulative total of AIDS related **deaths** is 220 (72.6% of AIDS cases)

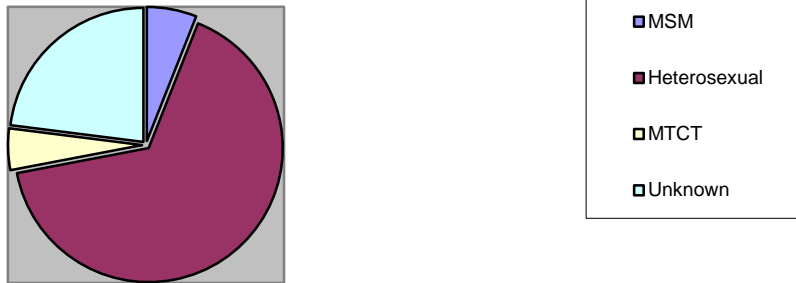
The age group 15 to 34 has the highest number of HIV rerecorded with 109 males and 89 females. This is followed by the age group 35 to 44 with 93 males and 33 females. Consistent with other countries in the region, Grenada's 15 to 24 year olds attract attention with 62 cases recorded. Among these are 27 males and 35 females. The overall male/female ratio of HIV in Grenada is 1.9:1.

Reported data in the first decade of the epidemic (1984-1993) showed 86 cases of HIV. During the second decade (1994-2003), the number rose to 165 cases representing a 53% increase over the previous decade. HIV cases increased from 1 in 1984 to 23 in 1993 with an annual average of 9 cases between 1984 and 1993. The average number of new cases per year for the last decade (2002 to 2011) is 25. The highest number of new cases since the beginning of the epidemic is 38 recorded in 2007.

MODES OF TRANSMISSION

The main modes of HIV transmission in Grenada is Sexual intercourse. The following pie chart shows how the transmission of HIV is distributed in Grenada. There is an assumption that there is a significant number of men who have sex with men and sex workers in Grenada although over the years it has proved difficult to reach these groups. However, in recent times it has become easier with the initiative of the two groups in their response to HIV.

Modes of transmission of HIV in Grenada 2006-2008



Upon diagnosis of the first case of HIV in Grenada, efforts began to minimize the spread and reduce the impact on infected and affected persons and on the country as a whole.

The national response started in 1985 with the establishment of a **National AIDS Task Force** mandated to advise the Ministry of Health on matters concerning HIV and AIDS, prevention and control and to support programme implementation. This was followed in 1986 with the establishment of the **National AIDS Programme** (NAP) a unit within the Ministry of Health. In 2002, a decision was taken to replace the NAP with the National Infectious Diseases Control Unit (NIDCU) to respond to the continuing spread of HIV, related infectious diseases (such as Tuberculosis) and other sexually transmitted infections.

Since the establishment of the unit there has been a more expanded and strategic response to HIV and AIDS in Grenada.

This aims of the National Response are:

- To improve the quality of life for people living with HIV and AIDS through appropriate treatment Care and support
- Reduce the economic burden of HIV infection by preventing opportunistic infections and reducing inappropriate diagnostic tests and treatment.
- Implement and facilitate prevention programmes such as education and condom promotion and distribution
- Reduce stigma and discrimination
- Formulate and establish healthy workplace and national policies on dealing with HIV and AIDS and infected persons.

It is envisaged that the care of Persons with HIV will be fully integrated into the existing Health Care System in the near future.

The Health Sector Response to HIV in Grenada-2010

Grenada's Health Sector response to HIV was reorganized and strengthened in the early two thousands to meet the changing needs of infected and affected persons and to adjust to the additional challenges and protocols required to reduce the incidence of HIV transmission.

Although the strategies have changed, HIV continues to be a challenge requiring more stringent responses to the epidemic.

While all diseases present certain major challenges those surrounding HIV are surrounded with Issues of sexual taboos, value judgment, stigma and discrimination and social and religious norms which still exist in Grenada and threatens the success of HIV prevention.

However, The National Infectious Disease Control Unit is mandated to respond to these issues. As such the Unit's programmes are divided into three broad areas:

1. Prevention and Control
2. Treatment, care and support
3. Surveillance and research

With limited resources, the Ministry of Health continues to do all that is necessary in the response to HIV and AIDS in order to improve the quality of life of People living with HIV and AIDS and their families, and to reduce the impact of the disease on the Nation.

Since HIV is now considered a chronic manageable disease, efforts are continuing to assist persons to manage their illness and take control of their health.