

INTERNATIONAL  
**Herald Tribune**

*AIDS:  
Latin America:  
Brazil*

**AIDS growing more quickly among adults in Brazil, defying global trend**

**The Associated Press**

Friday, December 1, 2006

AIDS is growing fastest among older Brazilians due to impotency drugs like Viagra which allow them to be more sexually active and is declining among the younger population, the health ministry said Friday.

In the past decade, the number of Brazilians aged 50 to 59 infected with HIV/AIDS has increased by 64 percent — from 18.2 cases per 100,000 people to 29.8 per 100,000 people — the ministry said in a study released on World AIDS Day.

"With the rise of Viagra and drugs like it, older men, who tend to use protection less frequently than their younger counterparts, are having sex more often, which increases the risk of spreading the virus," Daniela Brito, a ministry spokeswoman said by phone from the capital, Brasilia.

During the same period, the number of AIDS cases per 100,000 people aged 25 to 34 dropped 36 percent, the study showed.

"The free availability of condoms and widespread sexual education in schools have caused the infection rate to go down among younger people," Brito said. "That generation has grown up with AIDS and is more aware of how to prevent it."

The change in HIV/AIDS infection rates gives Brazil an unusual profile.

"Both worldwide and in Latin America, the young have by far the highest numbers of people with the disease and the fastest growing infection rates," Rose Munhoz, a Latin America adviser for the U.N. AIDS program, said by phone from her office in Panama.

Munhoz said that although she was not familiar with the Brazilian government study, the United Nations is impressed with the country's success in fighting AIDS.

The Brazilian government provides free anti-viral treatment to anyone who needs it, significantly improving the life expectancy of those infected.

The treatment has reduced HIV transmission from mother to child by 50 percent, the study showed.

The health ministry this year distributed some 25 million condoms, more than double the 11 million condoms distributed last year, at celebrations across this nation of 185 million people.

Those prevention efforts have paid off.

In 1990, the World Bank estimated Brazil would have 1.2 million people infected with HIV by 2000. Today, half that number, or around 600,000 Brazilians are estimated to be infected with HIV/AIDS, Brito said.

Since 1980, 183,000 Brazilians have died from the virus or from related causes.

