

Brunei Darussalam

Overview:

Health and HIV situation

Over the years, HIV prevalence rates in the Kingdom of Brunei Darussalam¹⁴ have remained low. By the end of 2004, a cumulative total of 618 HIV cases, including 26 AIDS cases, had been reported.¹⁵ The HIV prevalence rate in Brunei is below 0.1%, according to 2006 estimates.¹⁶

The large majority (95.8%) of new reported HIV cases is among migrant workers with nearly all reported HIV and AIDS cases occurring in men (92%) and heterosexuals (84%).¹⁷

National HIV programme and response

The people of Brunei enjoy free medical health care provided via government hospitals, health centres and clinics throughout the country. All medical expenses incurred by Brunei citizens are borne by the Government. HIV treatment, care and support, including life adjustment counseling, are provided free of charge to Brunei citizens and permanent residents, regardless of age, gender or race. However, access to health for its large population of migrants and overseas workers depends on their work contracts and permits.

In accordance with the national HIV control programme, and the Foreign Workers Health Screening Programme established in 1967, the Ministry of Health of Brunei Darussalam has developed Operational Procedures for Foreign Workers Health Screening with provisions on pre-departure medical examinations for foreign workers seeking employment in Brunei.¹⁸ If found HIV-positive, migrant workers cannot obtain a work visa or permit.

On-arrival health screenings and mandatory periodic health checks that include HIV testing are also part of national HIV control procedures.¹⁹ Migrant workers tested HIV positive in Brunei are repatriated to their origin country, and do not benefit from referral and counseling services in Brunei. In many instances, migrant workers' countries of origin are not equipped with comprehensive HIV prevention, care, treatment, VCT and support services for returning migrant workers.

Migration patterns

Brunei is a major destination country for domestic or low-skilled labour from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Bangladesh, and Thailand.²⁰ There were 122,400 estimated migrants in 2006,

according to the National Encyclopedia. Major destination countries for citizens of Brunei Darussalam are Australia, Canada, Germany, the Philippines, the United Kingdom, and the United States.²¹

Comprehensive information on HIV infection rates and risk behaviours among migrants is not available.

HIV response for migrant populations: Gaps and opportunities

The challenge for Brunei remains to include migrant workers in national medical health care systems and to ensure comprehensive HIV prevention, care, treatment, VCT and support services for migrant workers in the national HIV control programme.

Referral services for migrants testing HIV positive in Brunei need to be put in place. The absence of gender-based data collection mechanisms and surveillance systems on HIV and mobility issues remains a gap.

¹⁴ Hereinafter referred as "Brunei"

¹⁵ UNAIDS/WHO, *Epidemiological Fact Sheet on HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Brunei Darussalam*, December 2006, page 4

¹⁶ UNAIDS, *2006 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic, Brunei Darussalam*, 2006, p. 322

¹⁷ UNAIDS/WHO, *Idem*

¹⁸ Ministry of Health, Brunei Darussalam, *Information on the Operational Procedures for Foreign Workers Health Screening* (year of publication not available)

¹⁹ *Idem*

²⁰ US Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report 2007, 2007*, p. 216

²¹ *Migration Policy Institute, MPI Data Hub, Brunei*, Source: Development Research on Migration