

Summary of key data from the findings of the HIV and AIDS and Gender Baseline Study in South Africa

QUANTITY OF COVERAGE	% SOUTH AFRICA	% REGION
HIV coverage compared to total	2	3
HIV mentioned	30	36
HIV central focus	70	64
WHO SPEAKS		
Women and men - all topics	40 (F) / 60 (M)	39 (F) / 61 (M)
Person affected by HIV	3	4
Women and men affected by HIV	38 (F) / 63 (M)	59 (F) / 41 (M)
People with HIV	6	4
Women and men with HIV	63 (F) / 37 (M)	44 (F) / 56 (M)
Traditional & religious groups	2	5
Women and men traditional and religious groups	57 (F) / 43 (M)	18 (F) / 82 (M)
Civil society, NGOs, INGOs	31	28
Women and men in civil society, NGOs and INGOs	50 (F) / 50 (M)	47 (F) / 53 (M)
Experts	15	12
Women and men experts	33 (F) / 68 (M)	36 (F) / 64 (M)
Officials/UN agencies	35	42
Women and men officials/UN agencies	29 (F) / 71 (M)	31 (F) / 69 (M)
Other	9	5
Women and men other	38 (F) / 62 (M)	40 (F) / 60 (M)
TOPICS		
Prevention	26	41
Who speaks on prevention?	40 (F) / 60 (M)	42 (F) / 58 (M)
Treatment	24	16
Who speaks on treatment?	39 (F) / 61 (M)	37 (F) / 63 (M)
Care	14	13
Who speaks on care?	59 (F) / 41 (M)	52 (F) / 48 (M)
General	26	19
Who speaks on general?	25 (F) / 75 (M)	27 (F) / 73 (M)
Impact	4	5
Who speaks on impact?	40 (F) / 60 (M)	35 (F) / 65 (M)
TYPES OF STORIES		
News & briefs	78	78
Cartoons, images, graphics	2	2
Editorial & opinion	5	4
Feature & analysis	5	10
Feedback	5	3
Interview, profile & human interest	5	3
WHERE DO STORIES COME FROM?		
International	22	13
Regional	9	8
National	55	54
Provincial	4	6
Local	10	19
WHO TELLS THE STORIES?		
Original story	77	77
Guest writer	3	5
Agency	20	18
WHO REPORTS ON HIV and AIDS?		
Overall	58 (F) / 42 (M)	45 (F) / 55 (M)
Who reports on what?		
Prevention	50 (F) / 50 (M)	39 (F) / 61 (M)
Treatment	66 (F) / 34 (M)	56 (F) / 44 (M)
Care	67 (F) / 33 (M)	57 (F) / 43 (M)
General	45 (F) / 55 (M)	39 (F) / 61 (M)
Impact	75 (F) / 25 (M)	39 (F) / 61 (M)
Other	88 (F) / 13 (M)	50 (F) / 50 (M)

SOUTH AFRICA

HIV and AIDS and GENDER BASELINE STUDY



The Southern African Media Action Plan



on HIV and AIDS & Gender

The South Africa HIV and AIDS and Gender Study is part of the Media Action Plan (MAP) on HIV and AIDS and Gender, led by the Southern African Editors' Forum (SAEF). The MMP, which leads the monitoring sub-sector of MAP conducted the monitoring and produced the quantitative results for South Africa. Gender Links (GL), which leads the policy sub-sector of MAP, edited the qualitative research and wrote the report.

South Africa has one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in the world, with an estimated 5.5 million people infected in 2006. The most recent statistics released by the Department of Health in 2004 stated that prevalence had risen to 29.5%. The first cases of HIV were diagnosed in 1982, at the height of apartheid, primarily amongst gay, white men. Since then the rate of infection has steadily risen in the general population.

In October 1999, in a speech to the National Council of Provinces, President Thabo Mbeki first publicly raised questions about the toxicity of AZT, an antiretroviral drug that had been used to treat people with HIV. In early 2000, President Mbeki announced the formation of a presidential advisory committee on HIV and AIDS that would investigate, amongst other things, whether HIV caused AIDS. This led to an outcry, both in South Africa and internationally. This confusion about the official position on HIV and AIDS continues today, but in 2003, the government committed itself to the roll out of a comprehensive plan on prevention, treatment, care, and support including the provision of antiretrovirals in public health facilities.

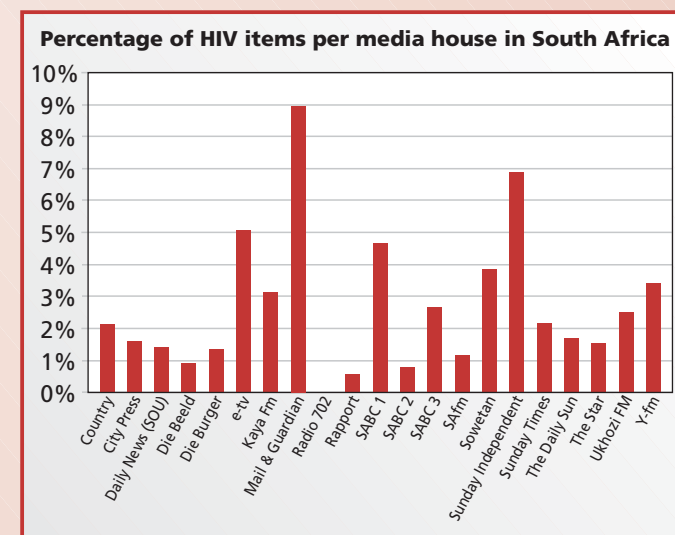
The monitoring included 118 media houses in eleven Southern Africa countries, for a total of 15 days staggered over a period of one month between October and November 2005. Monitoring in South Africa covered 20 media houses. The key findings are summarised in the table at the back of this pamphlet.

KEY FINDINGS

The coverage of HIV is extremely low: In South Africa, only 2% of stories in all media monitored

focused on or mentioned HIV, compared to the regional average of 3%. This is only slightly higher than the country with the lowest proportion of HIV coverage in the region, Mauritius, at 1%. In contrast, 19% of coverage in Lesotho mentioned, or focused on HIV and AIDS.

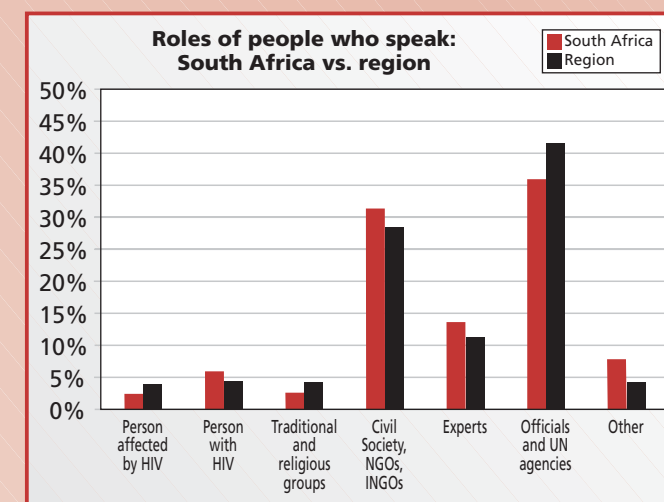
There is considerable difference between media houses, with weekly newspapers (the *Mail & Guardian* at 9% and the *Sunday Independent* at 7%) having the highest coverage of HIV and AIDS stories. Daily papers averaged between 1% and 2% while radio and television averaged between 3% and 5%.



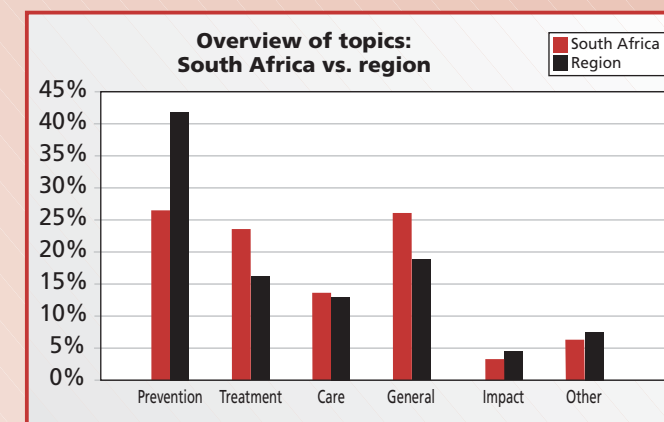
HIV and AIDS is not being mainstreamed into coverage: 70% of all the items monitored had HIV as the central focus of the stories, while 30% only mentioned the issue. This suggests that HIV is not being adequately mainstreamed in all coverage but is largely reported as a stand alone health issue.

Male voices still predominate: Although there is a higher proportion of women sources in the HIV topic category (40%) than in general coverage (26% in the latest Global Media Monitoring Project), male voices predominate in all areas of HIV coverage except for care work.

People with HIV are hardly heard: People with HIV constituted 6% of all sources (compared to 4% in the region) with officials, UN agencies and experts constituting the majority of sources on HIV and AIDS.



There is a more even spread of HIV topics in South Africa: Compared to the region, there is a more even spread of HIV topics in South Africa, with prevention accounting for 26% (compared to 41% in the region) and treatment accounting for 24% (compared to 16% in the region). This may be due to the politicisation of treatment in South Africa.



Stories lack depth and local grounding: Both in South Africa and in the region, the vast majority of HIV coverage is presented as news stories (78%). Some 55% of all stories emanated nationally, with only 4% from the provinces and 10% from local areas. The remainder concerned international and regional news.

There is a relatively high level of original stories being produced: On the positive side, most stories on HIV and AIDS in South Africa are original stories, written by journalists, rather than obtained from agencies and guest writers. This shows that newsrooms are investing resources in obtaining original stories.

And there is good gender balance on the beat: In South Africa, women reporters accounted for 58% of all items monitored, compared to 45% in the region. In most countries in Southern Africa, including in South Africa, women journalists are more likely to access women sources than men, but in neither case do they do so in equal measure. This points to the importance of working towards greater gender balance in newsrooms, but also of ensuring gender sensitivity and awareness for both male and female journalists.

The gender dimensions of the epidemic are not receiving sufficient coverage: Despite the increasing gender balance in newsrooms, gender is not well integrated into HIV and AIDS coverage, much of which was classified in the study as either gender blind or unclear. Closer analysis of topics showed that:

- ◆ In stories about prevention, the sub-topics that examined cross-generational sex, gender power relations, gender based violence and sex work, all significant drivers of the epidemic in the country and the region, received less than 5% each of the coverage.
- ◆ In stories about treatment, the prevention of mother to child transmission received no coverage at all.
- ◆ In stories about care, support, and the environment, the role of men and boys received no coverage in South Africa, while state care received more coverage than home-based care that has a particular relevance for women.

Policies, training and access to information can help to improve the quantity and quality of coverage: Through the collaborative efforts of a number of organisations, MAP offers support to media houses that wish to develop HIV- and AIDS and gender policies, as well as integrate these into the workplace and editorial practices.