

Russia's HIV Situation 'Epidemic' — Rospotrebnadzor

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Russia's HIV infection rates have become epidemic, spreading to citizens beyond at risk groups, the head of Rospotrebnadzor's epidemiology supervision department in St. Petersburg, Irina Chkhindzheriya said, the Interfax news agency reported.

"We have to admit that the country's soaring HIV rates can be described as epidemic. About 1 percent of Russians are HIV-positive ... The epidemic has broken through traditional limits and is spreading to the general population," Chkhindzheriya said, Interfax reported Monday.

According to Rospotrebnadzor, about 50 percent of HIV-positive Russians contracted the disease by using needle-injected drugs, and 42 percent — through heterosexual contact.

About 1 percent of pregnant Russian women are infected with HIV, giving birth to more than 600 congenitally infected infants every year, the report said.

"Statistics show that approximately 50 people per 100,000 of the population are HIV-positive, and the situation becomes much worse in the regions," Chkhindzheriya said, Interfax reported.

At the start of the month, the total number of registered HIV-positive Russians numbered 986,657.

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9