

Healthcare Officials in Yekaterinburg Call HIV Situation There an 'Epidemic'

They also point out that the word "epidemic" "doesn't mean anything"

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Healthcare authorities in Russia's Ural city of Yekaterinburg officially declared an HIV epidemic, Russian news agencies reported on Wednesday. According to the authorities, 26,693 cases of HIV were registered as of Wednesday, which means that 1.8 percent of the city's population is infected.

The level of infection varies in different municipalities, local officials say. In general, the Sverdlovsk region – of which Yekaterinburg is the capital – has the highest number of HIV cases per 100,000 people in Russia. In 52 percent of the cases, people got infected because of their drug use, and only in 46 percent of cases through sexual contact.

Later on Wednesday, deputy head of the local healthcare directorate Tatyana Savina denied that an official epidemic was declared, the Dozhd TV channel reported. She maintained that

calling the HIV situation in the city an "epidemic" "didn't mean anything." "For us medics, of course it's an epidemic," she said. "But I'm not inclined to think that [Russia's healthcare watchdog] Rospotrebnadzor would declare an official HIV epidemic."

The number of HIV-positive patients registered in Russia reached one million in January, according to Vadim Pokrovsky, head of the Moscow-based Federal Center for Fighting AIDS. However, experts estimate that the number of HIV-positive people in Russia is closer to 1.5 million, since the entire population has not been examined, Pokrovsky noted.

It is expected that a total of 93,000 new HIV cases will have been registered in 2016, which is a historically high level.

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