

Russia Dismisses Data Showing World's 5th-Highest HIV Infection Rate

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Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency

Russia [hit back](#) Thursday at widely reported data which placed the country as a leader in new HIV infections worldwide as “provocative propaganda.”

Russia accounted for 3.9% — the world's fifth-highest share — of the 1.5 million new HIV cases reported around the world in 2021, the data platform Statista [said](#) last Thursday, citing the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC).

The alarming figures are “yet another propagandist provocation directed against our country,” Russia’s Health Ministry said in a statement.

Related article: [Russian HIV Charities Face Funding, Supply Crisis](#)

The ministry praised Russia’s expanding HIV testing coverage as “one of the world’s

highest,” which “allows us to obtain the most objective data.”

“Despite the obvious successes of Russian medicine, we increasingly observe attempts to falsify statistical data on the situation with HIV in our country,” the ministry said.

Calling the UNAIDS and ECDC data “arbitrarily and tendentiously interpreted,” it claimed that Russia’s total HIV infections have decreased by more than 30% from 2018 to 2021.

Russia has more than 850,000 people currently living with HIV, or less than 0.6% of the population, the ministry added.

In late September, consumer protection watchdog Rospotrebnadzor [reported](#) that the country saw approximately 60,000 new HIV infections in 2021 — compared to roughly 25,000 new cases across the entire European Union.

Russia’s national program to combat HIV has said it expects an additional 600,000 new cases by 2030.

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