

POSITIVE CONNECTIONS



Wake Up Pune Newsletter

What is Wake Up Pune?

Launched in November 2006, the *Wake Up Pune* initiative is a concentrated effort to make Pune aware of the HIV epidemic that faces this city. Different groups from civil society have joined forces to run the campaign. Members include NGOs, companies, youth networks, media professionals and other concerned individuals from Pune.

The campaign's goal is to provide a wake-up call for Puneites on the issue of HIV and AIDS and to foster a **new attitude** about HIV in Pune.



New Attitude?

BE HIV POSITIVE! This means:

Be **positive** about education - ourselves and others about HIV and AIDS.

Be **positive** about awareness - in our wider community.

Be **positive** about support - people living with and affected by HIV and AIDS.

Issue 1
July 2008

Statistics...

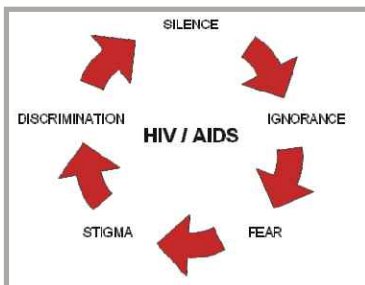
1% prevalence of HIV is classified as an epidemic by the World Health Organisation (WHO)

In 2007 (Jan - Oct) 18,039 people were tested in Pune, **12.27%** tested HIV positive. Although this is not a prevalence rate it is an indicator that HIV is a problem in Pune.

Stigma & Discrimination

Silence: because of HIV's association with sex and other perceived immoral behaviour, we become silent about HIV. This prevents us from obtaining accurate information, including about HIV transmission and prevention. This then leads to a state of **ignorance**. We remain ignorant about HIV while accepting myths surrounding HIV, which our ignorance. When our only knowledge

about something is based on myths, ignorance and silence, we develop irrational **fear**. We fear everything that has to do with HIV, and our fear leads to **stigma**. The stigmatisation then leads to **discrimination** against people living with and affected by HIV, the groups deemed most at risk for HIV, and those looking for accurate information about HIV in order to protect themselves. Stigma and discrimination lead to more **silence**, and so the vicious cycle continues.



Inside this issue:

HIV Myth Busters!

- Injecting Drug Use

- Get Tested!

- Be HIV Positive

- Games and quizzes

WAKE UP PUNE  **YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

HIV Myth BUSTING!

What is HIV?

- HIV stands for **H**uman **I**mmunodeficiency **V**irus.
- It is the virus that causes AIDS.
- It depletes the body's ability to fight infection.
- Being infected does not mean a person has AIDS or is ill.

What is AIDS?

- AIDS stands for **A**cquired **I**mmune **D**eficiency **S**yndrome.
- It is the clinical condition that results from long-term infection with HIV.
- It is fatal.



How is HIV Transmitted?

The are only **four** ways to contract HIV:

- 1) Unprotected sex (vaginal, oral, anal).
- 2) Sharing HIV infected needles.
- 3) Exposure to HIV infected blood.
- 4) From HIV positive mother to child.

There are only **four** bodily fluids that can transmit HIV:

- 1) Blood.
- 2) Semen.
- 3) Vaginal fluid.
- 4) Breast milk (only in the context of breastfeeding from mother to child).



HIV CANNOT be Transmitted Through...

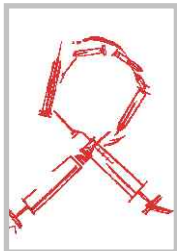
- Coughing, sneezing.
- Shaking hands, kissing or touching.
- Sharing food or drinks.
- Sharing crockery or cutlery.
- Contact with toilet seats.
- **Insect or animal bites.**
- **Swimming pools, baths.**
- **Eating food prepared by someone with HIV.**

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) enters the body, replicates, and attacks the cells of the immune system. Attacking the immune system weakens the body's defences against infection. This means that an HIV+ person is susceptible to a number of opportunistic infections. Once the body's immune system is weakened to a certain level, and the individual is exposed to a number of infections, the person infected with HIV progresses to AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). It is at this stage where HIV infection becomes fatal, due to the body's **increasing inability to fight off common opportunistic infections** (such as pneumonia, diarrhea, and - especially in India - tuberculosis)

However, the reality is that **HIV does not have to lead to AIDS!**

HIV is defined by the World Health Organization as a **chronic** and **treatable** condition, like diabetes. By taking proper care, it is possible to live with HIV without ever progressing to AIDS.

Management of HIV requires strengthening the weakening immune system. **Proper nutrition** is crucial to keep the body healthy and strong. HIV positive people require **medical treatment** (including but not limited to anti-retroviral drugs), good **mental health**, and **social support** - which includes access to resources like adequate health care facilities, housing and employment, as well as an **environment free from stigma and discrimination**.



Why Should I Be Tested for HIV?

Early intervention means a healthier life

The key to living a healthy life with HIV is being diagnosed early. HIV+ people with a healthy lifestyle and a good diet combined with drugs can lead a full life for a long time.

Knowing your status protects you and other people

If you know that you are HIV positive, you can take steps to protect other people, including your partner. For example, by practicing safe sex and informing your past sexual partners.

Knowing your status allows you to make informed decisions

Knowing your status allows you to make informed decisions regarding your future and your life. For example, women living with HIV can have the family they always wanted. Knowing you are HIV positive allows you to take steps to protect your unborn baby.

Now you can ask the right questions

Knowing your body is an important part of living a healthy life. Get tested for HIV and if you are positive ask the right questions.

Know your status... and get the most from your doctor visits

When you're not feeling well, your doctor will be better able to treat you if he has all the facts. If he knows your status, he can address the special needs your HIV demands... And it's up to you to get the most of your doctor visits.

Before being tested, it's a good idea to talk to your friends or family. You can also talk to an HIV test counselor without committing to taking the test. Here are some questions to consider regarding testing:

What is an HIV test?

An antibody test is one type of HIV test. This test shows whether a person has been infected with HIV. The test looks for HIV antibodies in a person's blood. When HIV enters a person's body, special chemicals are produced, which are known as antibodies. Antibodies are the body's response to an infection. So if a person has antibodies to HIV in their blood, it means they have been infected with HIV.



How is an HIV antibody test done?

When you go to get tested you will see a doctor, trained counselor, nurse or health care worker in private. He or she will explain what the test involves and what the result means. A small sample of blood will be taken and then analysed in laboratory tests. The test is completely confidential and your personal doctor will not be notified of the results without your permission.

How long must I wait for my results?

Depending on the test used and where it is done, it can take anything from a few minutes, to a few weeks to get the result back. You should ask your doctor at the time of testing how long the results will take.



Suggested testing centres in Pune

Please call for an appointment:
Deep Griha Society, Tadiwala Road,
9823599274

Dr Madhu, Maitri Clinic, Dattawadi,
9890044477

Wake Up Pune—Educate Yourself About IDU

What is IDU? Intravenous drug use (IDU) is the process of injecting recreational drugs, such as heroin, cocaine, brown sugar etc.

Why is this important? One of the four ways HIV can be transmitted is through the sharing of infected needles. This puts injecting drug users particularly at risk from contracting HIV. The stigma and discrimination surrounding drug use makes it difficult for users to seek treatment for their addiction. This creates an environment perpetuating the further use of drugs to alleviate the negative emotional and physical feelings associated with drug use, like depression and withdrawal. Many drug users' families have disowned them, leaving them with little social support. Therefore, drug users are in great need of a supportive environment to help them discover the options available to them and empower them to regain control over their lives and health.



It is estimated that 0.2% of India's population is currently injecting drugs (AVERT) and the majority are sharing needles (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2004). Injecting drug users exhibit high levels of HIV-related risk behaviour associated with injection use and unprotected sex. Harm reduction focuses on short-term pragmatic goals to prevent the transmission of HIV by reducing the sharing of drug equipment (needles), and reducing unprotected sex. Information about how to inject safely and different options, such as oral substitution (instead of injecting), are provided for drug users, without asking them to completely quit drugs. This method has shown an increase

in the number of drug users who later choose to become drug-free (UNAIDS 2006). Sexual health education is also important; one which emphasises condom use, reaches out to the sexual partners of drug users and provides STI and HIV testing and treatment referral. This is especially relevant for the sexual partners of injecting drug users, since they are at a greater risk of contracting HIV.

Whilst the number of injecting drug users in Pune is unknown, the area of Pimpri has registered well over 100 injecting drug users in its oral substitution programme since June 2007. The IDU population in neighbouring Mumbai, Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipu, all have an HIV prevalence well over 20% (UNODC, 2004). Through our work with both injecting and non-injecting drug users, we've identified users from these areas who've migrated to Pune for work or study purposes. Students from these cities, as well as from other countries with a high prevalence of drug use, make Pune vulnerable to greater incidences of drug use.



Pune City Action Plan (PCAP) sees the joining of forces of Sahara, Sharan, and the Deep Griha Society, to focus on harm reduction for IDUs in Pune. The Drop-In-Centre and Outreach Programme for Drug Users in Pimpri focuses on oral substitution therapy and includes community outreach, abscess management, counselling and nutrition, primary healthcare and an overnight shelter for those who require it.

The centre is open everyday from 10am—5pm.

Plan,
making a donation or finding out more information about drug use and HIV/AIDS, please contact:
Abbas Parvaneh - Pune City Action Plan Coordinator -
abbas.parvaneh@gmail.com / 9970740921

If you are interested in volunteering with the Pune City Action



Staff Profile: Abbas, Pune City Action Plan Coordinator



Profile: Abbas Parvaneh

Age: 42

Organizations Associated With: Sahara, Sharan, and Pune City Action Plan (PCAP) Coordinator

When did you come to India from Iran?

I came to India in 1994. I lived in Mumbai before settling in Pune in 2007.

How did you get involved with the Pune City Action Plan (PCAP)?

I began working with Sahara in 1998 in the rehab centre as a counselor working with drug users. By 2007 I was in charge of the rehab centre. In 2007 I came to Pune to work with Sahara and I started Pune City Action

Plan; bringing together Sahara, Sharan and the Deep Griha Society to work with drug users and their awareness about HIV and AIDS.

I began to know the people who were addicted. They are facing psychological problems that you can't overcome overnight. So I became more interested in helping them as much as I could, because there were people who made me aware of problems surrounding addiction. So when I realised that there was a way to have control over this addiction I tried to show others the way to overcome addiction. I would like to thank those people who helped me with my problem, like Mr Neville Selhore, Elizabeth Selhore and Mr Luke Samson. And how by being in Pune and discovering that there are IDUs in the city who don't have any information about the risks of contracting HIV, I realised how important it is to promote awareness in this community.

Why is HIV/AIDS awareness so important in Pune?

Most people in India have an idea about AIDS, but not HIV. People say HIV? What is this? HIV affects everyone and people need to educate themselves.

Why is HIV/AIDS awareness among injecting drug users so important?

HIV can be transferred through the sharing of needles used to inject drugs. Many drug users may not know about the ways HIV can be spread or think that simply washing needles is enough to protect yourself from HIV. Lack of money also means drug users do not prioritise buying new needles, over buying drugs.

Why is HIV/AIDS awareness difficult with injecting drug users?

Drug users face not only the stigma and discrimination from using drugs, but the stigma and discrimination surrounding HIV/AIDS, meaning that many drug users do not want to come forward and learn about how to protect themselves.

What does the PCAP drop in centre offer people?

The centre focuses on harm reduction, offering drug users information on how to inject safely and care for their health. We also offer oral substitution, to try to limit those who are actually injecting. The programme concentrates on safe injecting, moving towards no injecting (oral substitution) and offers counselling for those wishing to quit their addiction. It is important to get people thinking about their health again. At the centre, we look at the long-term picture and aim to give people a handle on their life.

Launch of 'HIV Positive' Campaign

The 'HIV Positive' campaign aims at reducing HIV/AIDS-related stigma and discrimination in Pune, by fostering a positive attitude about HIV/AIDS. Pune should be positive about:

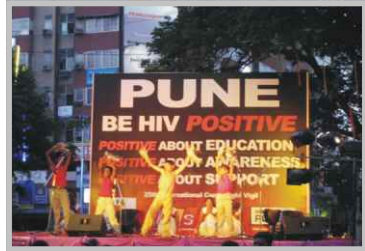
Education: Positive about educating oneself and others about HIV/AIDS

Awareness: Positive about raising awareness about HIV/AIDS in the wider community

Support: Positive about reaching out and supporting people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS

And so...the introduction of the 'HIV Positive' T-shirt! Wait...**WHAT?** There's a T shirt that says 'HIV Positive' on it? Yup, there sure is! Our goal is to pass out 5,000 T shirts, and collect responses from the people about reactions to their T-shirts.

WHY? I mean I would wear the T-shirt, but how is this going to really help? Our goal is to target 2 categories of individuals: those that come up to you and ask a question or comment and those that stare, and give you a dirty look. When someone questions you, you are given the opportunity to inform them about the real facts of HIV/AIDS. Explain to them what you are positive about, and encourage them to do the same. Many more however will stare, and in this way you are destroying the stereotype (read African AIDS Orphan or Sex Worker), and encouraging the belief that HIV positive individuals look no different.



Testimonials...

Whilst wearing a 'HIV Positive' T-shirt, one of our volunteers was asked to leave the public toilets by a shopper at the Mariplex, calling the volunteer **"disgusting."**



"I went to meet the Manager at to thank him for organizing everything we'd asked for. "So," He started off after brushing aside my thank you. "Are you all wearing these Tshirts?"

"Yes," I said, and then gave him the whole spiel about the HIV POSITIVE campaign. "What about me? Won't

you give me one too?" I was quite kicked! "Of course we will." I replied. "On the condition that you promise to wear it. Will you?" Then came the nervous laughter. "He he. I would really like to but how can I? I am on duty na." "But sir, you're the manager here. You don't have a uniform. And you are allowed to dress casually aren't you?" "Yes, yes. Of course. But how it will look? HIV POSITIVE. Won't look nice if I'm walking around on the floor wearing that no? Doesn't give a good impression."

"What impression might that be?" I asked and then quickly added, "Sir?" So he wouldn't sense the irritation in my tone.

"Oh, you know... People will think all kinds of things. And I am the manager here. I have to maintain my position you know." He must have sensed I wasn't going to let this one go so he quickly spoke again before I could say anything more, "Anyway, it is good that you people are here doing all this good work. All the best ha. Chalo, I must go now. Duty calls."

So managers cannot be HIV POSITIVE... or HIV POSITIVE people cannot be managers...I don't know..."

– Gayatri Natarajan



"After rallying with Wake Up Pune, in order to get the HIV/AIDS bill passed, I met my parents in a shoe store on M.G. road. My mum looked at my t-shirt, sighed (we had had a conversation

about it earlier) but didn't say anything. I think she is coming to terms with the work I do, and what I am fighting for. The man who was helping my mum however didn't seem so accepting: he asked me "whether I was trying to scare my friends away, or not?" At first I was confused, and looked at him for further explanation, to which he pointed at my t-shirt. I smiled, and told him that I am Positive about Awareness, Education and Support, and that I am working to decrease stigma and discrimination of PLHV in Pune. He quickly agreed, saying that my work was good. I hadn't expected him to be so receptive, which just increased my belief, that by doing something as simple as wearing a T-shirt, I'm making a difference. As I encouraged him, I encourage you all to do the same."

– Aleefia Somji

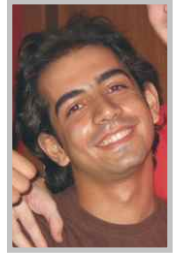
Get INVOLVED!

Volunteer: Javad Chehri, volunteer

Age: 26

Work: Research assistant in Ruby Hospital, Consultation of Medical Genetics

Years in India: 4



How long have you been a volunteer with Wake Up Pune?

I've been a volunteer since February, for 4 months now.

How did you get interested in becoming a volunteer with Wake Up Pune?

An old volunteer recommended this to me. When I was in university as a medical student in Iran, I learnt a lot about HIV and AIDS, and it interested me greatly. I even wrote a book on it called 'What is HIV?'. Now I get to work with it – it's perfect.

What does being a volunteer involve?

It's really easy. Since I already have a full time job, I don't volunteer full time, but come for day events that Wake Up Pune holds. So for example, just a few weeks ago on the 18th of May I helped with the event at INOX Theatres where I got people to sign for the support of the HIV/AIDS bill, we then rallied for a few days later. I've also been involved with things such as street plays, and just helping out wherever I can. It's amazing how there is always something to do.

What is your favourite thing about being a volunteer?

Definitely interacting with people, both the local Puneties, and the volunteers. They come from all over the world, so you really learn a lot.

What is the hardest thing about being a volunteer?

There are so many people out there at all different levels, that its hard to find various ways to target them all.

Is there anything else you'd like to say to future volunteers?

Take the Lead. Be HIV Positive and get involved!

Join the THE '10' CAMPAIGN

It's the simplest way to stop the spread of HIV –

TALK about it!

Share the 4 ways of HIV transmission with 10 people... friends, classmates, colleagues – and ask them to do the same with 10 other friends!

Become a Volunteer!!

Have work? School? Prior commitments? Sign up with Wake Up Pune, and become a day volunteer!

Have more free time? Get assigned to small projects, and make a difference with Wake Up Pune!

Get a Cool T-shirt!

Do you want to own a 'HIV Positive' T-shirt? All you have to do is organise an HIV/AIDS awareness session with a group, call us to find out how!

Become 'HIV Positive'

Join Soul, 69, High Spirits and Cerillion and get certified 'HIV Positive.' Educate your employees over 2–4 HIV/AIDS awareness sessions and receive your certificate!

Take the Lead. Educate your employees. Be HIV Positive.

Hold a Fundraising Event

Engage people in your local community, school, university, church, workplace etc.

Email wakeuppune@gmail.com if you are interested in any of the above activities!

Can You Spot the Difference?

Who is HIV Positive? Who is Not? (Turn page around for answers)



Answer: HIV does not discriminate, why should you? An HIV positive person looks like everyone else, there is no difference between the two.

Quiz Yourself!

In which of the following ways can HIV be transmitted? (Turn page around for answers)

- A) Coughing and Sneezing
- B) Blood Transfusions
- C) Unprotected anal sex
- D) Kissing and swallowing saliva
- E) Unprotected oral sex
- F) Mosquito Bites
- G) Holding hands with an HIV positive person
- H) Unprotected vaginal sex
- I) Sharing a bottle with an HIV positive person
- J) Child birth
- K) Oral drug use
- L) Intravenous drug use
- M) Eating a meal cooked by an HIV positive person

Answers: B), C), E), H), J), L)

Upcoming Events

Questions about sex, relationships, sexuality, or substance abuse?

ASK A PUNEWALI!
hey.punewali@gmail.com

Confidential, accurate and non-judgmental in our replies. Look for your reply on the website or in the next issue of **POSITIVE CONNECTIONS!**

Turn off Drugs and Turn on the Music!

11th July 2008

Featuring Iranian Sufi band—AVA, and more! Come along for a fun evening!

1st December

World AIDS Day



Wake Up Pune
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