The 2008 Sierra Leone Demographic and Health Survey (SLDHS) included HIV testing of almost 7,500 women age 15-49 and men age 15-59. According to the survey, 1.5% of the people of Sierra Leone age 15-49 are HIV-positive.

HIV prevalence ranges from a low of 0.8% in the Southern Region to a high of 2.9% in the Western Region.

Overall, 1.7% of women and 1.2% of men are HIV-positive. HIV prevalence is higher among women than men in both urban and rural areas. HIV prevalence is 2.5 times higher in urban areas than in rural areas (2.5% versus 1.0%).

Women become infected at younger ages than men. Prevalence for both women and men increases with age until it peaks at age 30-34 for women (2.4%) and at age 45-49 for men (2.1%).

For both women and men, HIV infection rates are considerably higher among those who are widowed or divorced/separated than those who are married/living together or those who have never been married.

20% of HIV-positive women had previously been tested and received the results of an HIV test.
Knowledge of HIV Prevention

Percent of women and men age 15-49 who know that HIV can be prevented by:

- Using condoms: 43% Women, 62% Men
- Limiting sex to one uninfected partner: 48% Women, 67% Men
- Abstaining from sexual intercourse: 40% Women, 58% Men

Less than half of women know each of the three major methods of preventing HIV transmission. Men are slightly more knowledgeable, with more than two-thirds of men knowing that limiting sex to one uninfected partner reduces the risk of getting HIV.

HIV Prevalence Among Youth Age 15-24

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>1.6</td>
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<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
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<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HIV prevalence among young women age 15-24 is 3.5 times higher than among young men age 15-24.

Response rates and methodology: HIV prevalence data were obtained from testing dried blood spot (DBS) samples voluntarily provided by women 15-49 and men 15-59 who were interviewed in the 2008 SLDHS. The DBS were collected using the finger stick method. Of the 7,495 eligible subjects, 86% provided DBS specimens. Response rates were higher in rural areas than urban areas (89% vs. 83%).

For more information on the results of the 2008 Sierra Leone Demographic and Health Survey, please contact:

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