The United States is lagging in the global battle against HIV and AIDS, a new U.N. report says, with inadequate treatment and a drop-off in awareness among the reasons the U.S. carries a disproportionate share of HIV and AIDS cases among wealthy nations.

The report also found that African-Americans are far more likely than other ethnic and racial groups in the United States to be infected with HIV and 10 times more likely than whites to die from AIDS.

The report says that while African-Americans made up 13.2 percent of the U.S. populations last year, they accounted for an estimated 46 percent of people living with HIV in the country and half of AIDS-related deaths.

According to the report, in 2010 African-Americans “had the highest rate of AIDS-related deaths, at 11.6 deaths per 100,000 people, compared to 2.8 deaths per 100,000 Latinos and 1.1 deaths per 100,000 whites.”

The report by UNAIDS, the agency that monitors HIV and AIDS throughout the world, said the United States accounted last year for 54 percent of the estimated 88,000 new HIV infections in Western and Central Europe and North America, and 69 percent of the 27,000 AIDS-related deaths in those areas.

The five largest European countries _ France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy and Spain, with a total population roughly similar to the United States _ together accounted for 28 percent of the new HIV infections, according to the report.

The report blames the high death rate in the United States on “late diagnosis of HIV, poor treatment adherence and high levels of early treatment discontinuation.” For comparison, Canada, the United Kingdom and Germany each accounted for 2 percent of the 27,000 deaths.

The report includes the U.S. among the 15 countries worldwide that account for more than 75 percent of the 2.1 million new HIV infections that occurred last year. Others include Nigeria, South Africa, China, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mozambique, Uganda and Tanzania.
Luiz Loures, UNAIDS’s deputy executive director, told McClatchy he’s concerned that in the U.S. and in rich Western European countries, “primarily young gay men (and men who have sex with men) are more complacent about the AIDS epidemic. They have a false impression that AIDS is over.”

He said the gay community was the first to mobilize the world against AIDS, but added, “I think the gay community today is more concerned about gay marriage than prevention of AIDS. They need a wake-up call.”

In the U.S, and in Western Europe, he said, “we see a tendency of increasing infections among gay men.”

UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibe said that while tremendous progress had been made in the global fight against AIDS, “19 million of the 35 million people living with HIV globally don’t even know they have the virus.”

“Whether you live or die should not depend on access to an HIV test,” he said.

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