

# COLUMBIA SPECTATOR ARCHIVE

Columbia Daily Spectator, Volume CXXXV, Number 124, 30 November 2011 — Halfway through AIDS pandemic? Hopefully  
[ARTICLE+ILLUSTRATION]

## *Halfway through AIDS pandemic? Hopefully*

BY LAUREN CHADWICK

*Columbia Daily Spectator*

Amirah Sequeira, CC '12, is probably one of the few students on campus who can talk a mile a minute about “the rockstars of AIDS advocacy” and antiretroviral drugs. She, and other members of the Student Global AIDS Campaign, have put their expertise and enthusiasm to good use this week for World AIDS Week, which commemorates the 30-year anniversary of the global pandemic.

Sequeira said that this year is a pivotal one for AIDS advocacy: New research indicates that with enough funding for prevention, the pandemic will be wiped out in the next 30 years.

“This year is a really beautiful moment. If people really act on this new research, this will be the halfway point,” she said.

For the 30th anniversary of the pandemic, the group has been making cold calls to politicians and collecting donations for prevention funding that experts hope will put HIV/AIDS to rest within 30 years.

From a tent on Low Plaza.

members of the Student Global AIDS Campaign have been running a public art project. For \$1, students can buy three tiles that represent the base pairs of a codon. Those tiles are added to a board, representing a HIV genome that these students are creating, with 9713 base pairs in all.

The week's keynote event on Thursday includes "rockstar" advocates like Jeffrey Sachs from the Earth Institute, Dr. David Hoos from the Mailman School of Public Health, and Laura Pinsky, who founded the Columbia Gay Health Advocacy Project, which provides free HIV/AIDS testing to all Columbia students.

"We've really tried to put together an event that will provide the Columbia community with different perspectives," Sequeira said. "It will give a really rounded update on where we are and where we are going."

GlobeMed, another student advocacy group that has worked to plan World AIDS week, will receive one-third of the fundraising profits from the week. Isabelle Fisher, CC '14 and a

member of GlobalMed, said it will in turn donate the money to an organization that works to lower the rate of mother-to-child transmission of HIV in northern Uganda.

Sequiera said that the 30-year mark has energized students this year.

“We’re also doing call-ins to the White House to demand Obama to fund 6,000,000 people on treatment by 2013,” she said. “If he commits to this, because of his example we should have 15,000,000 [people covered by treatment] by 2015. We’re on our way to ending the pandemic.”

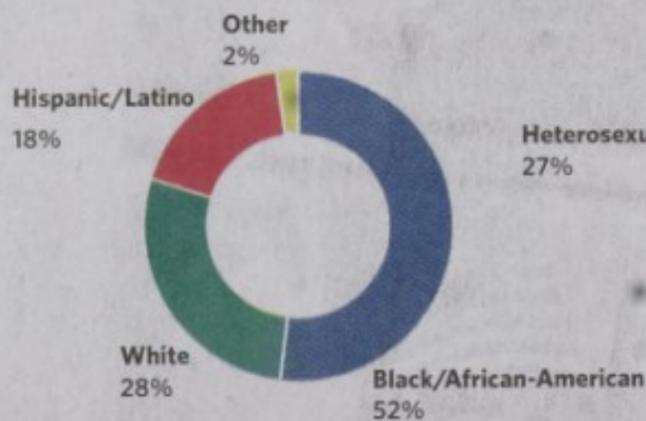
Sonal Mallya, CC '12 and a member of CUSGAC since her first year at Columbia, cited statistics from the National Institute of Health that state that people on treatment are 96 percent less likely to transmit HIV to their partners.

“If we give adequate funding to treatment for HIV/AIDS we can get the pandemic under control in the next 30 years,” she said. “But the next five years are crucial as the virus spreads very quickly.”

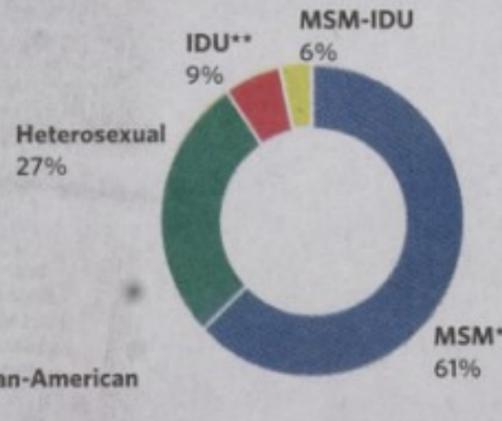
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## HIV IN THE UNITED STATES

BY RACE/ETHNICITY



BY RISK GROUP



\*MSM - Men who have sex with men

\*\*IDU - Injecting drug user

**1.2 MILLION**  
people in the United States  
live with HIV



**ONE IN FIVE**  
Americans infected with  
HIV are unaware of it

**50,000**  
Americans are infected  
with HIV each year

DATA COURTESY OF CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION / GRAPHIC BY YUMA SHINOHARA