An unusual increase in HIV/AIDS cases among older persons was reported to the Hunan Centers for Disease Control between 2005 and 2007. Cases originated in four rural, western districts of this inland province of China. Given the historical concern for outbreaks of HIV in rural areas due to blood donation, these cases prompted closer examination to understand the reasons for their appearance and to take measures to prevent further spread.

Eighty cases met our investigation criterion of 50 years or older and underwent a structured interview. The median age was 65 years (range 51–82); 42% were female. Most were ethnic minorities, 76% Tuja and 9% Miaoz, with low education. Nearly all had been married; 43% were widowed. Most (54%) spent time away from their spouse (median 5 years); 10% were currently sexually active with a spouse; few ever used condoms with their spouse.

Investigation of the possible modes of HIV acquisition suggests most infections among men were from female sex workers (83% paid for sex, two-thirds in the last 5 years); 82% had no knowledge that condoms could prevent HIV. Most cases (86%) were detected incidentally during the course of treatment for other diseases or during routine examination. The median age was 50 years (range 51–82); 10% were currently sexually active with a spouse; few ever used condoms with their spouse.

Our investigation highlights that basic information on HIV/AIDS is not reaching all parts of China, and may especially lag among rural and older people. Discussion of sex with older people has been taboo in China, presenting special challenges in finding effective ways to reach them. As treatment extends survival, the cohorts of persons living with HIV will also age. The movement of people between urban and rural areas, an ageing population and the shift of the HIV/AIDS epidemic to sexual transmission are three trends in China that may now have a dangerous intersection.

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### References


### Corrections

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### Author list for these abstracts should read


### Author list for this abstract should read

RamaKrishnan A, Sgaier S. The author’s name Zidal SV should be correctly spelt as S Zarate Vidal.