

ABSTRACT:

INDIA, CHINA, AND THE POLITICS OF AIDS

The nations of China and India have long been a source for comparison. In recent times, public health policy has become a common concern, as the two nations now find themselves at the new epicenter of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Through an examination of the epidemiological trends of the disease as well as the specific government policies used in response, this paper offers a model for the spread of the disease in the two nations, an explanation as to why this has become a growing problem for this region, and predictions as to what might be the future of the epidemic there. Based on original research conducted with the National AIDS Control Organisation in New Delhi, India, I provide a detailed model for the evolution of the disease in India, focusing on how it was allowed to spread from high risk groups to bridge populations and finally to the general population. I offer explanations as to why the epidemic has taken on such a drastic course in India, which is now home to the greatest number of HIV/AIDS cases in the world, focusing on the failures of early government policies and strategies. Finally, using this detailed model for India, I offer predictions about the future of HIV/AIDS in China. These predictions are based on statistically supported trends in China such as a mass migration from rural to urban areas, and a rise in prostitution and unsafe sexual practices. I suggest that if stronger policies are not enacted with respect to increased public awareness of the disease and promotion of safe sexual practices, the epidemic in China could follow trends exhibited by India and spread to the general population at alarming rates.