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Metropolitan

## 1,207 found HIV positive in country: Study

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A total of 1,207 people have been found HIV positive across the country while 12,000 are believed to be carrying the virus, says a surveillance study report.

The rate of HIV positive among injecting drug users (IDUs) in Dhaka city is seven percent, it added.

Quoting the government's 7th round of HIV surveillance study and UNAIDS study, experts revealed the information at a seminar on 'HIV/AIDS for students' at Brac Centre Inn in the city yesterday.

Centre for Gender, Sexuality and HIV/AIDS, a UNAIDS collaborating centre at the James P Grant School of Public Health at Brac University, organised the seminar.

Around 200 students, doctors and professionals from all the private and public universities in the city took part in the programme.

The organisers said, "The objective of the seminar is to build awareness and disseminate widespread information among young people, especially those who are most vulnerable to be infected in HIV/AIDS."

According to UNAIDS study, some 10 million youths from 15 to 24 years of age are HIV positive across the globe and every day 6,000 youths are infected with the virus. The majority lack access to effective prevention programme, while many cannot access condoms.

Experts said HIV in Bangladesh remains at a relatively low level, but its prevalence among IDUs continues to grow. The study showed that around 20,000 to 40,000 people across the country are IDUs and of them, 7, 400 are living in the city.

They stressed the importance of increasing awareness among the people of taking drug, as it has the most possibility to be infected with HIV.

Terming awareness the only vaccine for preventing HIV, the speakers called on the government and other organisations to come forward to raise awareness by holding more meetings, seminars and symposia on HIV/AIDS.

Brac University Pro-Vice Chancellor Dr Salehuddin Ahmed, Centre for Gender, Sexuality and HIV/AIDS Coordinator Sabina Faiz Rashid and representatives of Unicef, UNAIDS and UNFPA spoke at the programme.