

HIV cases rise steadily over decade

The prevalence of HIV/AIDS in China remains low, but certain groups, such as elderly men, are at increasing risk of infection, according to the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

The country reported 68,000 HIV/AIDS cases this year, as of the end of June, an increase of 8.5 over the same period in 2016, Gao Fu, the center's director, said on Monday at the International Symposium on HIV Prevention and Control in China, organized by the National Health and Family Planning Commission.

As of June, the number of people living with HIV/AIDS in China was 718,000 [about 5 per 10,000 population]he said.

Sex remains the primary mode of HIV transmission in China, with homosexual contact taking an increasing share of newly reported infections, he said. About 12 percent of infections were the result of homosexual contact in 2010, but the figure rose to 25.6 between January and June this year, Gao said.

Elderly men have also become more vulnerable. Last year, the number of reported HIV/AIDS cases among males age 60 or above more than tripled to 16,505 from the 4,751 reported in 2010, he said. Part of the reason for the sharp spike is that authorities had seen numbers in the older age group rising, so more HIV testing was conducted, Gao said.

"Nowadays more elderly people have free time for entertainment, such as square dancing, which gives them more opportunities to find partners," he said. "Although they are 60 or older, they can still be sexually active; and some may have been infected by prostitutes."

Wu Zunyou, chief epidemiological expert at the CDC, said the increasing number of elderly males infected with HIV is linked with less restricted living conditions, and a major effort should be undertaken to fight prostitution aimed at elderly men.

China faces various challenges in tackling HIV/AIDS, such as the increasing number of users of new drugs, and the fact that about one-third of those infected are either not identified or do not know they are infected, Gao said.

According to a five-year plan released by the State Council in February, authorities should intensify education and promote awareness among key groups vulnerable to HIV, such as migrant workers, students and the elderly.

Health and cultural authorities should take more steps to promote a range of constructive entertainment activities for the elderly, the plan said.

Chinese student's murder case sparks controversy

The murder case of a Chinese student killed in Japan last year has attracted wide attention online as the case is set to be heard in Japan next month.

On Sina Weibo, a popular social media platform in China, the hashtag #Murder case of Chinese student in Tokyo# has garnered more than 1.8 billion views.

Jiang Ge, a 24-year-old Chinese student from Qingdao, Shandong province, was killed at her apartment in Tokyo on Nov 3, 2016. Jiang was a postgraduate student at Hosei University.

In the early hours of Nov 3, 2016 (local time), Jiang was stabbed to death in the corridor of her apartment by the ex-boyfriend of her roommate.

According to media reports, Liu Xin, the victim's roommate and her close friend, moved in with Jiang after breaking up with her boyfriend two months before the tragedy happened.

Liu's boyfriend, Chen Shifeng, went to Jiang's apartment to look for Liu that afternoon. The three had a quarrel and left the house afterwards. That same night, Liu and Jiang went back to the apartment, with Liu arriving first.

Liu said when she was changing her pants in the house, she heard screaming outside the door. She tried to open the door, but found it was blocked. Then she called the police.

The victim's mother, Jiang Qiulian, blamed Liu for her daughter's death by claiming Liu had locked Jiang out when she was attacked. She also criticized Liu for avoiding her and refusing to explain to her the details of the incident face-to-face after the tragedy happened.

According to a report from thepaper.cn, Jiang said Liu and her families refused to answer her request of explaining the incident to her and did not send any condolence to her.

On May 21, 2017, Jiang posted an article on Sina Weibo, exposing the personal information and photos of Liu and her parents, asking web users to offer information about Liu's address and whereabouts.

In response to criticisms, Liu told thepaper.cn that she did not see Jiang's mother after Jiang was killed because she was under the supervision and protection of the police, banned from seeing anyone related to Jiang to protect the validity and confidentiality of the evidence, and said she did not lock the door.

Liu, who is also from Qingdao, was Jiang's classmate during their middle

school years, and the two became close friends after meeting each other in Japan.

The case, which is to be held in Tokyo on Dec 10, has become a hot topic online.

One of the most upvoted comments below a post on Sina Weibo said: "I can understand that she (Liu Xin) felt too scared to open the door... But the way she responded to the incident makes me feel a chill. After her roommate's death, she did not even say sorry to the (victim's mother)."

Another comment said: "The murder will be punished by the law, and Liu is probably guiltless from a legal perspective. But her behavior and attitude (towards the tragedy) is disgusting."

The victim's mother, who is in Tokyo to attend the hearing next month, is collecting signatures from local residents in a call for a death sentence for the murderer.

[China dominates list of world's top supercomputers again](#)

Once again, China dominated a new list of the world's fastest supercomputers, not only taking the top two seats, but also pulling ahead of the United States in the sheer number of systems being used.



Photo taken on June 20, 2016 shows Sunway TaihuLight, a new Chinese supercomputer, in Wuxi, east China's Jiangsu Province. [Photo/Xinhua]

CHINA'S DOMINANCE

According to a biannual ranking of the world's 500 fastest supercomputers, called the Top500 published Monday, China's Sunway TaihuLight maintains the lead as the No. 1 system for the fourth time, with a performance of 93.01 petaflops.

China's Tianhe-2, or Milky Way-2, is still the No. 2 system at 33.86 petaflops. Intel chip-based Tianhe-2 had topped the list for three years until it was displaced in November 2015 by TaihuLight, which was built by entirely using processors designed and made in China.

The No. 3 is Switzerland's Piz Daint, which is also the most powerful supercomputer in Europe. A new system in Japan, called Gyoukou, is the No. 4, pushing Titan, the top U.S system, to the No. 5.

"For the second time in a row there is no system from the U.S. under the TOP3," Top500 said in a statement.

And that's not all. The 50th edition of Top500 ranking also shows that China has overtaken the United States in the total number of ranked systems by a margin of 202 to 144. Just six months ago, the United States led with 169 systems, and China with 159.

"It is the largest number of supercomputers China has ever claimed on the TOP500 ranking, with the U.S. presence shrinking to its lowest level since the list's inception 25 years ago," Top500 said.

"China now clearly shows a substantially larger number of installations than the United States."

China has also overtaken the United States in aggregate performance as well. The Asian country now claims 35.3 percent of the TOP500 flops, with the United States at second place with 29.8 percent.

AMERICAN STRENGTH

When it comes to companies making these systems, the U.S.-based Hewlett-Packard Enterprise has the lead in the number of installed supercomputers at 123, which represents nearly a quarter of all TOP500 systems.

China's Lenovo followed HPE with 81 systems, down from 88 systems on the June list, and another Chinese company called Inspur jumped to the third position with 56 systems, up from the sixth place and 20 systems only six month ago.

Liu Jun, Inspur's high performance computing (HPC) general manager, told Xinhua said China and its research institutes and companies have invested a lot in supporting HPC research, development and innovation.

"So China has improved greatly in its HPC competitiveness and performance,"

he said. "In addition, the United States and Europe may have a more prolonged update cycle for their supercomputers."

Liu cautioned that China's overtaking of the United States in the total number of ranked systems didn't make too much sense.

"We should be soberly aware that core technologies of the mainstream products on the HPC market, such as CPU and GPU, are now still being dominated and controlled by U.S. companies," Liu said.

"China still lags far behind when compared with the U.S. and Europe and requires continuous efforts for further development," Liu said.

Experts also predicted that Summit, a system currently being developed by the U.S. Department of Energy, could dethrone China's TaihuLight next year, when it comes to run with an expected performance of 200 petaflops.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Other systems in the top 10 included Sequoia, Trinity and Cori of the United States, as well as Oakforest-PACS and K computer of Japan.

Top500 said this is the first time that each of the top 10 supercomputers delivered more than 10 petaflops.

There are also 181 systems with performance higher than a petaflop – up from 138 six months ago, according to the list.

Taking a broader look, the combined performance of all 500 systems has grown to 845 petaflops, compared to 749 petaflops on the June list and 672 petaflops one year ago.

"Even though aggregate performance grew by nearly 100 petaflops, the relative increase is well below the list's long-term historical trend," the list said.

And the entry point in the latest rankings moved up to 548 teraflops, compared to 432 teraflops in June.

"The 548-teraflop system was in position 370 in the previous TOP500 list," it said. "The turnover is in line with what has been observed over the last four years, but is much lower than previous levels."

The Top500 list is considered one of the most authoritative rankings of the world's supercomputers. It is compiled on the basis of the machines' performance on the Linpack benchmark by experts from the United States and Germany.

World's first 2,000-ton electric boat launched

The world's first 2,000-metric-ton electric boat was launched Sunday in the southern city of Guangzhou.



The world's first 2,000-metric-ton electric boat was launched Sunday in the southern city of Guangzhou.

With a battery capacity of 2,400 kilowatt-hours, the self-unloading ship built by Guangzhou Shipyard International has zero exhaust emissions.

The ship is powered by lithium battery and super capacitor, and can last up to 80 kilometers after a two-hour recharge.

The steel cargo ship will be used to carry coal and it will navigate on the Pearl River and other bodies of water.

Paddler plans to kayak to Arctic Ocean

The Irtysh River flows from Hou Zhili's hometown and leads to the Arctic Ocean – a journey Huo plans to make alone in a kayak.



The Irtys River in the northern Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region is the only river in China that leads to the Arctic Ocean. [Photo by Hu Huhu/Xinhua]

From where he lives in Fuyun county, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, the 41-year-old has completed what many see as epic feats – kayaking unpowered for 2,020 kilometers on the China and Kazakhstan sections of the Irtys in 2014 and 2016.

The paddler is preparing for the final and most challenging stage of the 2,200-km Russia section, plus the last 1,160-km of the Ob River, which the Irtys flows into before its waters reach the northern sea.

From its source in the Altay Mountains in Fuyun, the 4,248-km Irtys River flows northwest through Kazakhstan before merging with the Ob River in Russia. It is the only river in China that leads to the Arctic Ocean.

Huo's love for kayaking began when he was a teenager. In the 1980s, several white-water adventurers on China's two largest rivers, the Yangtze and the Yellow River, had become famous and started a craze among bold Chinese who took to rafting on streams across the country.

Some youngsters from Hou's hometown even drifted for hundreds of kilometers along the Irtys on rafts made of old tires.

In 2012, he decided to close his graphic design company and turned his hobby into a full-time occupation.

After arduous training, on Aug 28, 2014, Hou set out alone in his yellow and orange boat from Koktokay, a town near the source of the Irtys.

He paddled for 50 km a day, and took 23 days to arrive at Kaba county, where the 520-km China section of the river ends.

The river begins to freeze in November and does not thaw until April, so Huo planned to complete the Kazakhstan section the following year. When the time came, however, he was refused a visa.

His chance finally arrived as tourism cooperation between China and Kazakhstan improved with the Belt and Road Initiative.

Kazakhstan relaxed its visa procedures for Chinese tourists last year.

In August 2016, with the help of travel agencies from both sides of the border, Hou set out from Jeminay, a Chinese county bordering Kazakhstan. It took him 33 days to paddle the 1,500-km section.

The journey was longer and tougher than he expected.

The river width and current varied constantly. He fought hard to meet his target of 50 km a day. Camping on the riverbank when dusk fell was risky.

"I was lucky to return from the dangerous journey unharmed," he said.

Along the way, Hou was deeply moved by the friendly Kazakh people who gave him fresh produce and invited him to stay at their homes.

It has not been cheap. The challenge has cost a good portion of his savings.

To finish the task, he has to kayak further than the total of his two previous trips.

He also has to cross the vast and frigid Siberian landscape. The adventure in Russia will be much more demanding – physically and financially.

Hou went to Russia in September to assess his travel route and to coordinate with local tourism authorities.

He said the preparation is going well. The prospect of navigating a watercourse that is frozen solid for much of the year has not dampened his ambition.

Hou plans to start from the Russian city of Omsk next summer and to paddle all the way to Labytnangi, the last town on the Irtysh. From there he will approach the great northern ocean.

"I want to be a true hero in the eyes of my daughter," said Huo, who has a 12-year-old girl. Hou's wife, who at first did not understand his drive to complete such a dangerous journey now accepts his ambition and backs him.

"That support inspires me to hold on to my dream, no matter how many challenges I encounter," he said.