

New China News: AIDS top killer disease in China last year

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AIDS top killer disease in China last year: govt
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BEIJING (Reuters) - The AIDS virus became the top deadly infectious disease in China last year for the first time, killing 6,897 people in the first nine months of 2008, the official news agency Xinhua said on Tuesday.

The number of people infected with the HIV/AIDS virus doubled during that period, Xinhua said, citing a report posted on the Ministry of Health website.

Xinhua said there were a total of 264,302 HIV/AIDS cases by the end of September last year and 34,864 people have died of the disease so far.

United Nations figures estimate that 700,000 people in China were HIV positive by the end of 2007.

Xinhua said tuberculosis was the second biggest killer in the first nine months of last year, while rabies ranked third followed by hepatitis and infant tetanus.

The country reported a one-fifth rise in syphilis last year, with a total of 257,474 cases, while gonorrhea cases dropped by a tenth, China's health ministry said.

China on Sunday launched a national sex education campaign aimed at getting more people to seek treatment for sexually transmitted diseases and infertility.

(Reporting by Kirby Chien; Editing by Phakamisa Ndzamele)

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