Objectives: To describe the development, components, and initial uptake of Thailand’s national program for preventing mother-child HIV transmission.
Design: Historical review, interpretation of experience, national program monitoring.
Setting: Public health system, Thailand.
Participants: Policymakers, clinicians, HIV-infected pregnant women.
Intervention: Voluntary counseling and HIV testing of pregnant women, short-course zidovudine for HIV-infected women and their infants, formula feeding for infants.
Main outcome measures: Program components implemented; program uptake.
Results: Research, monitoring and evaluation of pilot projects, training, and policymaking provided the information, experience, infrastructure, and guidance to develop a program for preventing mother-child HIV transmission that was implemented in all Ministry of Public Health hospitals in Thailand in 2000. A national system was established to monitor program implementation.
Monitoring reports were received from 669 hospitals in 65 provinces for the period October 2000 through October 2003. During this period, 95.7% of 1,744,095 women who gave birth were tested for HIV, 75.9% of 19234 HIV-infected women giving birth received zidovudine, and 94.8% and 83.5% of the 18,888 children born to HIV-infected women received zidovudine and infant formula, respectively, through the program.
Conclusions: A national program for preventing mother-child HIV transmission was successfully implemented in Thailand. Early monitoring indicates good program uptake. Lessons learned from implementing this program include the importance of paying attention to counseling, communication, and training in the program, and using pilot projects and focused monitoring and evaluation data to guide the program development, expansion, and improvement.