2019 global HIV statistics

HIV continues to be a major global public health issue. In 2019 an estimated 38 million people were living with HIV (including 1.8 million children), with a global HIV prevalence of 0.7% among adults. Around 19% of these people (7.1 million) do not know that they have the virus.1

Since the start of the epidemic, an estimated 75.7 million people have become infected with HIV and 32.7 million people have died of AIDS-related illnesses. In 2019, 690,000 people died of AIDS-related illnesses. This number has reduced by around 40% since the peak of 1.7 million in 2004 and 1.4 million in 2010.2

The vast majority of people living with HIV are located in low- and middle- income countries. Of the 4,500 people who contract HIV every day in the world, 59% live in sub-Saharan Africa. East and Southern Africa remains the region most affected by HIV in the world, with 20.7 million people living with HIV and 730,000 new HIV infections in 2019.3
Reaching the 90-90-90 targets

While there has been progress towards UNAIDS’ 90-90-90 targets for prevention and treatment, year-on-year reductions this appears to be stalling, while the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the HIV response are not yet known.

UNAIDS and the World Health Organization estimates that the pandemic could cause more than 500,000 additional AIDS-related deaths in sub-Saharan Africa between 2020–2021 if treatment is completely disrupted. Even a 20% disruption could cause an additional 110,000 deaths. At current rates, the targets for 2020, which are reported in 2021, will not be reached.

The first 90%
In 2019, four out of five people living with HIV (81%) knew their status.

The second 90%
Among people who knew their status, four out of five (82%) were accessing treatment.

The third 90%
And among people accessing treatment, more than four out of five (88%) were virally suppressed.

West and Central Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia regions need urgent action if they are to reach the targets.
New infections

There is renewed concern that the annual number of new HIV infections among adults has remained static in recent years. In 2019, there were roughly 1.7 million new HIV infections – the same number as in 2018.\(^6\)

Since 2010, global new HIV infections have declined by 23%, from 2.1 million in 2010. Although this is nearly half the number of new infections compared to the peak in 1997 (2.9 million), the decline is not quick enough to reach the target of fewer than 500,000 new infections by 2020.\(^7\)

While new HIV infections among children (ages 0-14 years) globally have more than halved, from 310,000 in 2010 to 150,000 in 2019, reports indicate there is far less progress being made than previously thought. Much more also needs to be done to improve knowledge of HIV and HIV testing among adolescents and young people.\(^8\)

In 2019, 62% new adult HIV infections globally were among key affected populations and their partners, including sex workers, people who inject drugs, prisoners, transgender people, gay men and other men who have sex with men. These populations accounted for 99% of new HIV infections in Eastern Europe and Central Asia; 97% of new HIV infections in the Middle East and North Africa; 96% of new HIV infections in Western and Central Europe and North America; 98% of new HIV infections in Asia and the Pacific; 77% of new HIV infections in Latin America; 69% of new HIV infections in West and Central Africa; 60% of new HIV infections in the Caribbean and 28% of new HIV infections in East and Southern Africa.\(^9\)
Young women (ages 15-24) are especially at risk, with around 5,500 new infections each week occurring among this group. In sub-Saharan Africa, young women accounted for one in four new infections in 2019, despite making up about 10% of the total population, and are twice as likely to be living with HIV as men.¹⁰

More than one third (35%) of women around the world have experienced physical and/or sexual violence at some time in their lives. In some regions, women who experience violence are one and a half times more likely to become infected with HIV.¹¹ Yet the tide may be slowly changing for women, as new global HIV infections among women and girls fell by 27% between 2010 and 2019.¹²

The reduction in new HIV infections has been strongest in the region most affected by HIV, East and Southern Africa, where new HIV infections have been reduced by 38% since 2010. New infections have also fallen by 25% in West and Central Africa 25%, by 29% in the Caribbean, 12% in Asia and the Pacific and 15% in Western and Central Europe and North America. But in Eastern Europe and Central Asia the annual number of new HIV infections has risen by 72% between 2010 and 2019. New HIV infections have also increased by 22% in the Middle East and North Africa and by 21% in Latin American over the same period.¹³

We are sounding the alarm. Entire regions are falling behind, the huge gains we made for children are not being sustained, women are still most affected and key populations continue to
be ignored. All these elements are halting progress and urgently need to be addressed head on.

- Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS

Treatment

Despite challenges, new global efforts have meant that the number of people receiving HIV treatment has increased dramatically in recent years, particularly in resource-poor countries. In 2019, 67% of all people living with HIV were accessing treatment. Of those, 59% were virally suppressed.14

This equates to 26 million people living with HIV receiving antiretroviral treatment (ART) as of June 2019 – up from 7.7 million in 2010. But this level of treatment scale-up is still not enough for the world to meet its global target of 30 million people on treatment by 2020.15

Significant progress has been made in the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV (PMTCT). In 2019, 85% of all pregnant and breastfeeding women living with HIV had access to treatment to prevent transmitting HIV to their babies. This is more than double 2010 levels when just 45% of pregnant and breastfeeding women were receiving ART.16
HIV and tuberculosis (TB)

Tuberculosis (TB) remains the leading cause of death among people living with HIV, accounting for around one in three AIDS-related deaths. In 2018, 10 million people developed TB, around 9% were living with HIV. More than four in ten people (44%) who are living with both HIV and TB are unaware of their health status and are not receiving treatment.17

Funding

At the end of 2019, US$18.6 billion was available for the AIDS response. This was the second year global resources made available for the AIDS response had declined – dropping from 19.9 billion in 2017, a drop of 7%.18

Around 57% of the total resources for HIV in low- and middle-income countries in 2019 were drawn from domestic sources.19

UNAIDS estimates that US$ 26.2 billion will be required for the AIDS response in 2020.20

We cannot have poor countries at the back of the queue. It should not depend on the money in your pocket or the colour of your skin to be protected against these deadly viruses. We cannot take money from one disease to treat another. Both
HIV and COVID-19 must be fully funded if we are to avoid massive loss of life.

- Winnie Byanyima, Executive Director of UNAIDS

1. UNAIDS (2020) AIDSinfo.unaids.org
2. UNAIDS (2020) AIDSinfo.unaids.org
3. UNAIDS (2020) AIDSinfo.unaids.org
4. UNAIDS (2020) UNAIDS Data 2020, p.2
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