



KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

GLOBAL AIDS MONITORING REPORT

COUNTRY PROGRESS REPORT 2017

KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

Submission date:

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Overview

The Global AIDS Monitoring 2017 (GAM) report describes the progress achieved by Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) as of to December 2017 in the areas of HIV prevention, treatment and care as aligned to the ten Fast-Track commitments and expanded targets to end AIDS by 2030 for which the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia remains committed.

The process of data collection for the 2017 Global AIDS Monitoring report was undertaken between December 2017 and March 2018. The report writing for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) was guided by the leadership of the National AIDS Program Manager for KSA, along with guidance and support of the senior Ministry of Health Officials, and intensive inputs from the NAP staff. All key stakeholders involved in the AIDS response in KSA, were consulted and gave inputs through a series of meetings and interviews.

The GAM 2017 report reveals that Saudi Arabia has made substantial progress towards achieving or exceeding the 90-90-90-targets. In 2017, more than 90% who were aware of their status were accessing antiretroviral therapy, and more than 91% of people on treatment had suppressed viral loads.

Summary

1. The report incorporate data obtained from 20 HIV treatment centers located in eight regions of the Kingdom.
2. There were 6256 people living with HIV and know their status by the end of 2017, which is equivalent to 76% of the estimated number of people living with HIV (PLHIV).
3. There were 5,651 adults and children receiving antiretroviral treatment as of 31 December 2017 (Males = 74.8%, Females = 23.1%, Children <15 years= 2.1percentage). Among these who are receiving antiretroviral treatment, 533 newly started ARV treatment during 2017 (Males = 76.4%, Females = 23.1%, Children <15 years= 0.5percentage).
4. By the end of 2017, 92.4% of adults and children were known to be on treatment 12 months after initiation in the previous year (n = 458).
5. Ninety nine percent (99%) of all people on treatment received a routine viral load test.
6. Ninety one percent (91%) of patients on ARV treatment have achieved viral load suppression by the end of 2017 (n = 5,651).
7. Total number of reported AIDS related deaths has reduced to 33 in 2017 compared to 39 in 2016.
8. Ten percent (10%), of the treatment centers dispensing ARVs has experienced a stock-out of one or more required ARV drug in 2017 (n = 20).
9. All pregnant women known or identified to be living with HIV received antiretroviral medicines to reduce the risk of mother to child transmission of HIV (n = 45).
10. Among children born to mothers infected with HIV (n = 45), the percentage of infants receiving HIV test within two months of delivery was 97.8%.
11. Fifty eight percent of the pregnant women attending ANC in 2017 were tested for syphilis (n =253,398).
12. The Percentage of pregnant women attending antenatal clinics with a positive (reactive) syphilis serology in 2017 was 0.003% (n = 147,264)
13. Percentage of prisoners who are living with HIV in 2017 was 0.4% (n = 41,853).

14. The percentage of adults and children living with HIV newly enrolled in care who are detected having active TB disease was 3.8% (n = 579).
15. The Number of HIV-positive new and relapse TB patients started on TB treatment during 2017 who were already on antiretroviral therapy or started on antiretroviral therapy during TB treatment was 83 patients.
16. Number of patients started on treatment for latent TB infection, expressed as a percentage of the total number newly enrolled in HIV care during 2017 was 2.1% (n = 579)
17. More than 98% of persons started ARV treatment in 2017 were tested for Hepatitis B Virus (HBV). The number of persons diagnosed with HIV-HBV co-infection in HIV care during 2017 was 11 who were all started on combined treatment for both HIV and HBV.
18. The coverage rate with Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) testing among the PLHIV starting ARV therapy in 2017 was 94% (n = 533). Sixteen were diagnosed with HIV-HCV co-infection in HIV care during and all were started on treatment for Hepatitis C.

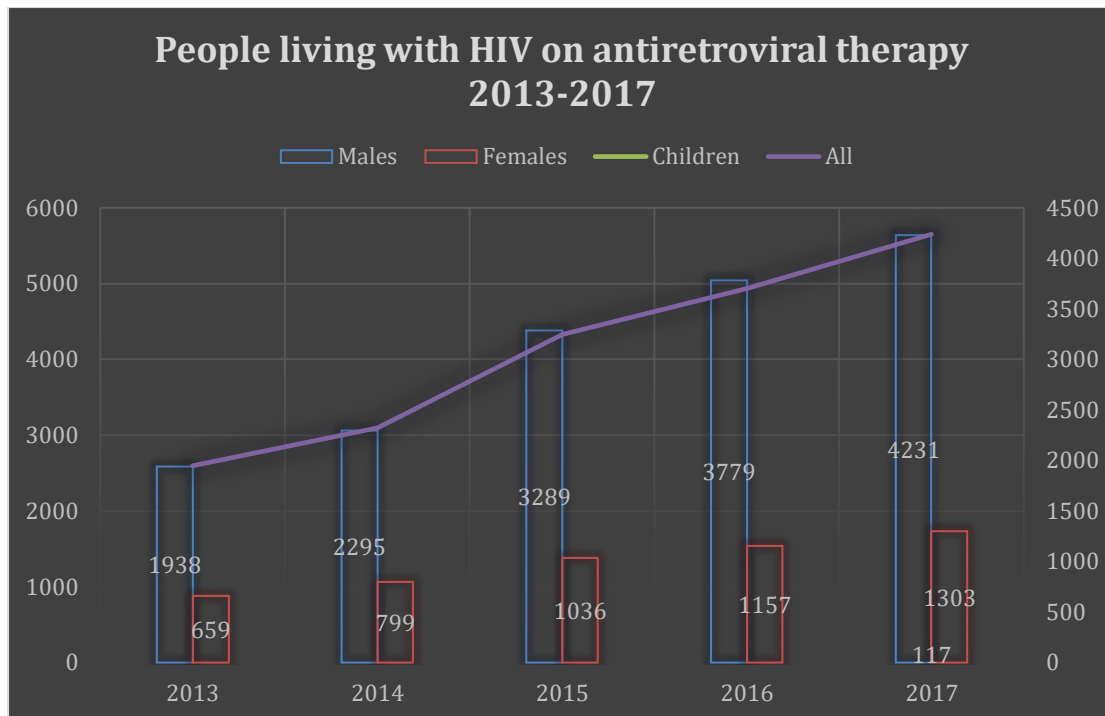
Commitment 1: Ensure that 30 million people living with HIV have access to treatment through meeting the 90–90–90 targets by 2020

People living with HIV who know their status

The total number of people living with HIV and know their status by the end of 2017 was 6,256 (76.5% males, 31.3% females, and 2.2% children <15years). The epidemic among Saudi Nationals continues to be predominated by men as they accounted for 80.4% of all the diagnosed infections (n = 7,615) and 82.5% of the newly reported HIV infections in 2017 (n = 427).

People living with HIV on antiretroviral therapy

KSA is on track towards achievement of the global treatment target of 90-90-90. Access to HIV care and treatment is provided free of charge to nationals of KSA through well-equipped and specialized treatment centers and in 2015 the Saudi National AIDS Program updated the National HIV treatment guidelines in order to increase access to HIV treatment and care services. By the end of December 2017, above Ninety percent (90.3%) of all diagnosed people living with HIV were on antiretroviral therapy. The number of adults and children receiving ART has been consistently increasing over the period 2013-2017. It has increased from 2597 in 2013 to 5651 in 2017.



Retention on antiretroviral therapy at 12 months

Retention on antiretroviral therapy after 12 months has increased from 86% in 2016 to 92.4% in 2017. Out of (458) adults and children initiating antiretroviral therapy in 2016, (423) were still alive and receiving antiretroviral after 12 months. Thirteen have died since starting antiretroviral therapy, (1) have stopped treatment and (15) PLHIV recorded as lost to follow-up at month 12.

Viral Load Suppression

Ninety nine percent of people on antiretroviral therapy had access to routine viral load testing during 2017, 91% of them had suppressed viremia to below the level of quantification at the time of their last available HIV-RNA measurement.

Late HIV Diagnosis

Of all persons newly enrolled in HIV care in 2017, 97.6% had an initial CD4 count (n = 579). Those with first CD4 cell count < 350 cells/ μ L accounted for 46.5% while 22.7% had first CD4 cell count <200 cells/ μ L. This implies that a substantial proportion of newly diagnosed persons are presenting late for testing and hence there is still a great need for significantly scaling up HIV testing services and interventions in the general population and among key populations.

Antiretroviral medicine stock-outs

The year 2017 witnessed major change in procurement and supply chain management of Antiretroviral drugs as the percentage of treatment centers dispensing ARVs has experienced a stock-out of one or more required ARV drug has reduced to 10% in 2017 compared 53% in 2016.

AIDS Mortality

Total number of people who have died from AIDS-related causes in 2017 was 33 persons accounting for a rate of 0.1 per 100 000 population. AIDS mortality remains low in the kingdom due to higher treatment coverage and better adherence to treatment.

Commitment 2: Eliminate new HIV infections among children by 2020 while ensuring that 1.6 million children have access to HIV treatment by 2018

Early Infant Diagnosis

Saudi Arabia is implementing effective follow-up of HIV-exposed infants until a definitive diagnosis can be made. In 2017, 45 infants were reported to be born to HIV positive women. 97.8% received HIV testing within two months of delivery. All of them tested negative for HIV.

Preventing the mother-to-child transmission of HIV

During the year 2017, a total of 45 HIV Positive pregnant women were identified of which 41 pregnant mothers were known positives at entry. All HIV positive pregnant women received antiretroviral therapy to reduce the risk of mother to child transmission of HIV. A major milestone on the way to the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV in KSA is the release of the National Act on HIV/AIDS Prevention and Protection of Rights and Responsibilities of People Living with HIV in Saudi Arabia in January 2018, which included the permission to conduct HIV counselling and testing among pregnant women. This will allow for diagnosing and providing lifelong antiretroviral therapy to almost all pregnant and breastfeeding women living with HIV.

Syphilis among pregnant women

Out of 253,398 women accessing antenatal care (ANC) services in 2017, 147,264 were tested for syphilis at first ANC visit with only 0.003% of them testing positive.

Congenital Syphilis Rate

Out of 599,164 live births in 2017, one congenital syphilis case was reported.

Commitment 3: Ensure access to combination prevention options, including pre-exposure prophylaxis, voluntary medical male circumcision, harm reduction and condoms, to at least 90% of people by 2020, especially young women and adolescent

girls in high-prevalence countries and key populations—gay men and other men who have sex with men, transgender people, sex workers and their clients, people who inject drugs and prisoners

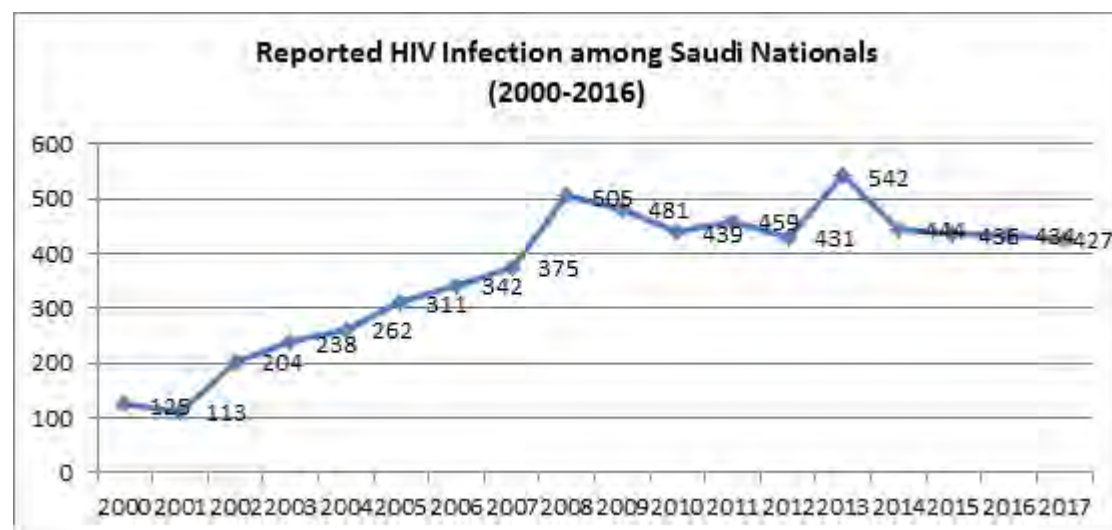
HIV-prevention programmes for the general population focus on general HIV awareness-raising through mass-media IEC messages informing on basic information on HIV along with modes of transmission and dispelling the present myths and misconceptions. The NAP also supports a 24-hour hotline call-centre system that provides HIV information and counseling services for the general population. HIV-prevention programmes for adolescents and youth focus on basic HIV knowledge in the curriculum of secondary schools.

In addition to general awareness-raising, other HIV-prevention interventions include condom promotion among discordant couples within PLHIV groups, as well as at STI clinics and in primary health-care centers. IEC materials are also disseminated and VCT services promoted at STI, TB and ART clinics.

Condoms are availed to discordant people living with HIV and to STIs patients and their spouses to prevent further spread of the infection.

HIV Incidence

The cumulative number of HIV infection among Saudi nationals over the period 1984-2017 was 7,615 including 427 newly diagnosed HIV infections which were reported in 2017. In 2017, the largest proportion of HIV cases among Saudi Nationals were diagnosed among people aged 20-29 years (29%), followed by the 30–39 year age group (28%) while the least proportion of HIV cases were diagnosed among people aged 10-19 years (3%).



HIV prevention programmes in prisons

Addressing HIV among prisoners is an important component of the national response in KSA as prisoners are considered among key populations at risk of HIV in KSA. In 2017, 41,853 prisoners were screened for HIV with 0.4% of them were found to be HIV positive.

COMMITMENT 4. Eliminate gender inequalities and end all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls, people living with HIV and key populations by 2020

Stigma and discrimination are most often cited as the major obstacle to the HIV response in KSA. Early this year, the Council of Ministers approved National Act on HIV/AIDS Prevention and Protection of Rights and Responsibilities of People Living with HIV. The Act, which came in 29 articles, insured the preservation of the rights of PLHIV and their relatives, the statement of their duties, the necessary care and support for PLHIV and their right to continue education and work.

COMMITMENT 5. Ensure that 90% of young people have the skills, knowledge and capacity to protect themselves from HIV and have access to sexual and reproductive health services by 2020, in order to reduce the number of new HIV infections among adolescent girls and young women to below 100 000 per year

The National AIDS Program continue its awareness interventions which are aimed at increasing access to knowledge, and information about HIV risks and prevention amongst the sexually active sections of the population. The youths, both male and female, were the primary targets of such interventions because they are the most sexually active age groups and evidence shows that new detected HIV infections are higher in these age groups. HIV-prevention programmes for adolescents and youth focus on basic HIV knowledge in the curriculum of secondary schools.

COMMITMENT 10. Commit to taking AIDS out of isolation through people-centered systems to improve universal health coverage, including treatment for tuberculosis, cervical cancer and hepatitis B and C

Co-management of tuberculosis and HIV treatment

In 2017, 83 of the patients co-infected with TB and HIV were treated with both ART and TB drugs (72 males and 11 females). Subset of PLHIV newly enrolled in HIV care (n=579), 22 were diagnosed with active TB disease (3.8%) while only 12 PLHIV received preventive therapy to reduce the risk of developing active TB (2.1%).

Sexually Transmitted Infection

The total number of men reported with urethral discharge during the reporting period was 1,562 (11 per 100,000 population).

The total number of adult men reported with laboratory-diagnosed gonorrhoea in the past 12 months was 319 (2 per 100,000 population).

Hepatitis B testing and Treatment

The total number of people started on antiretroviral therapy who were tested for hepatitis B during the reporting period using hepatitis B surface antigen tests was 524 (98.3%), out of them 11 were diagnosed with HIV and HBV co-infection. All the persons co-infected with HIV and HBV received combined treatment with antiretroviral medicines effective against both HIV and HBV.

Hepatitis C testing and Treatment

The adults and children starting antiretroviral therapy who were tested for hepatitis C during the reporting period using the sequence of anti-HCV antibody tests followed by HCV polymerase chain reaction (PCR) for those who are anti-HCV was 501 (94%), out of them 16 were diagnosed with HIV and HCV co-infection. All the persons co-infected with HIV and HCV were started on HCV treatment

Table 1 GARPR Indicators Overview

HIV prevention among general population				
COMMITMENT 1. Ensure that 30 million people living with HIV have access to treatment through meeting the 90–90–90 targets by 2020				
1.1. <u>People living with HIV who know their status in 2017</u>	Males	Females	Children <15 yrs	Total
A- Cumulative number of people living with HIV diagnosed	5875	1340	400	7615
B- Cumulative number of AIDS-related deaths	986	108	265	1359
C- Number of people living with HIV who know their status(A-B)	4889	1232	135	6256
1.2. <u>People living with HIV on antiretroviral therapy in 2017</u>	Males	Females	Children <15 yrs	Total
A- Number of adults and children receiving antiretroviral therapy at the end of the reporting period	4231	1303	117	5651
B- Persons newly initiating antiretroviral therapy during the last reporting year	407	123	3	533
1.3. <u>Retention on antiretroviral therapy at 12 months (2017)</u>	Males	Females	Total	
Percentage of adults and children with HIV known to be on treatment 12 months after initiating treatment among patients initiating ART	91%	96.3%	92.4%	
Number of adults and children who are still alive and on antiretroviral therapy at 12 months after initiating treatment	315	108	423	
Total number of adults and children who initiated ART who were expected to achieve 12-month outcomes within the reporting period	346	112	458	
1.4. <u>People living with HIV who have suppressed viral loads (2017)</u>	Males >15 yrs	Females >15yrs	Children 0-14 yrs	Total
Percentage of adults and children receiving ARV therapy who were virally suppressed in the reporting period (2017)	91%	92%	82%	91%
Number of adults and children receiving ARV therapy in the reporting period with suppressed viral load (i.e. ≤1000 copies)	3848	1199	96	5142
Number of adults and children currently receiving ARV therapy	4231	1303	117	5651

<u>1.5.Late HIV diagnosis (2017)</u>	Males >15 yrs	Females >15yrs	Children 0-14 yrs	Total
Total number of HIV-positive people with first CD4 cell count in 2017	426	136	3	565
Number and percentage of HIV positive persons with first CD4 cell count < 350 cells/ μ L in 2017	195 (45.8%)	66 (48.5%)	2 (66.7%)	263 (46.5%)
Number and percentage of HIV positive persons with first CD4 cell count < 200 cells/ μ L in 2017	92 (21.6%)	34 (25%)	2 (66.7%)	128 (22.7%)
<u>1.6.Antiretroviral medicine stock-outs (2017)</u>				
Percentage of facilities with stock-outs of antiretroviral drugs				10%
Number of health facilities dispensing ARVs that experienced a stock-out of one or more required ARV drug in the last 12 months				2
Total number of health facilities dispensing ARVs				20
<u>1.7.AIDS Mortality (2017)</u>				
	Males	Females	Total	
Number of adults and children receiving antiretroviral therapy at the end of the reporting period	30	3	33	
Total number of people who have died from AIDS-related causes per 100 000 population	0.2	0.02	0.1	
COMMITMENT 2. Eliminate new HIV infections among children by 2020 while ensuring that 1.6 million children have access to HIV treatment by 2018				
<u>2.1.Early infant diagnosis (2017)</u>				
Percentage (%) Percentage of HIV-positive pregnant women who received antiretroviral medicine to reduce the risk of mother-to-child transmission				97.8%
Numerator Number of infants who received an HIV test within two months of birth, during the reporting period. Infants tested should only be counted once				44
Test result - Positive:				0
Test result - Negative:				44
Denominator Number of HIV-positive pregnant women giving birth the last 12 months				45

2.2. <u>Mother-to-child transmission of HIV (2017)</u>		
Percentage (%) Percentage of infants born to HIV-positive women receiving a virological test for HIV within 2 months of birth		100%
Numerator Number of HIV-positive pregnant women who received antiretroviral drugs during the past 12 months to reduce the risk of mother-to-child transmission during pregnancy and delivery		45
Denominator Estimated number of HIV-positive pregnant women who delivered within the past 12 months		45
2.3. <u>Syphilis among pregnant women (2017)</u>		
Percentage of pregnant women accessing antenatal care (ANC) services who were tested for syphilis at any ANC visit		58.1%
Numerator Number of pregnant women attending ANC services who were tested for syphilis at any ANC visit		147,264
Denominator Number of pregnant women attending ANC services		253,398
2.4. <u>Syphilis among pregnant women (2017)</u>		
Percentage of antenatal care attendees who were positive for syphilis		0.003%
Numerator Number of pregnant women attending ANC services who were tested for syphilis at any ANC visit		4
Denominator Number of antenatal care attendees who were tested for syphilis		147,264
2.5. <u>Congenital syphilis rate (live births and stillbirth)</u>		
Percentage (%) of reported congenital syphilis cases (live births and stillbirth)		Zero%
Numerator: Number of reported congenital syphilis cases (live births and stillbirths) in the 2017		Zero
Denominator: Number of live births		252,611

COMMITMENT 3. Ensure access to combination prevention options, including pre-exposure prophylaxis, voluntary medical male circumcision, harm reduction and condoms, to at least 90% of people by 2020, especially young women and adolescent girls in high-prevalence countries and key populations—gay men and other men who have sex with men, transgender people, sex workers and their clients, people who inject drugs and prisoners			
3.1. HIV Incidence (2017)	Males	Females	Total
Number of newly diagnosed and reported HIV infections reported in 2017	353	74	427
3.2. HIV Prevalence among prisoners (2017)			
Percentage (%) of prisoners who are living with HIV			0.4%
Numerator: Number of prisoners who test positive for HIV			154
Denominator: Number of prisoners who tested for HIV			41,853
COMMITMENT 4. Eliminate gender inequalities and end all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls, people living with HIV and key populations by 2020			
4.1. Discriminatory attitudes towards people living with HIV			
Release of the National Act on HIV/AIDS Prevention and Protection of Rights and Responsibilities of People Living with HIV in January 2018.			
COMMITMENT 5. Ensure that 90% of young people have the skills, knowledge and capacity to protect themselves from HIV and have access to sexual and reproductive health services by 2020, in order to reduce the number of new HIV infections among adolescent girls and young women to below 100 000 per year			
5.1. Demand for family planning satisfied by modern methods - NA			
COMMITMENT 6. Ensure that 75% of people living with, at risk of and affected by HIV benefit from HIV-sensitive social protection by 2020			
COMMITMENT 7. Ensure that at least 30% of all service delivery is community-led by 2020			
COMMITMENT 8. Ensure that HIV investments increase to US\$ 26 billion by 2020, including a quarter for HIV prevention and 6% for social enablers			
COMMITMENT 9. Empower people living with, at risk of and affected by HIV to know their rights and to access justice and legal services to prevent and challenge violations of human rights			
COMMITMENT 10. Commit to taking AIDS out of isolation through people-centered systems to improve universal health coverage, including treatment for tuberculosis, cervical cancer and hepatitis B and C			
10.1. Co-management of tuberculosis and HIV treatment (2017)			
Number of HIV-positive new and relapse TB patients started on TB treatment during the reporting period who were already on antiretroviral therapy or started on antiretroviral therapy during TB treatment within the reporting year.			83
10.2. Proportion of PLHIV newly enrolled in HIV care with active TB disease (2017)			
Percentage (%) Total number of people living with HIV having active TB expressed as a percentage of those who are newly enrolled in HIV care during the reporting period			3.8%
Total number of people who have active TB disease during the reporting period of those newly enrolled in HIV care			22
Total number of people newly enrolled in HIV care during the reporting period			579
10.3. Proportion of PLHIV newly enrolled in HIV care on TB preventive therapy (2017)			
Percentage (%) Number of patients started on treatment for latent TB infection, expressed as a percentage of the total number newly enrolled in HIV care during the reporting period			2.1%
Total number of people living with HIV newly enrolled in HIV care who start treatment for latent TB infection during the reporting period.			12
Total number of people newly enrolled in HIV care during the reporting period			579

10.4. Men with urethral discharge (2017)		
Percentage (%)	Percentage of men reporting urethral discharge in the past 12 months	0.01%
	Number of men reported with urethral discharge during the reporting period	1,652
	Number of men aged 15 and older	14,357,293
10.5. Gonorrhoea among men (2017)		
Percentage (%)	Percentage of men reporting urethral discharge in the past 12 months	0.002%
	Number of men reported with urethral discharge during the reporting period	319
	Number of men aged 15 and older	14,357,293
10.6. Hepatitis B testing (2017)		
	Proportion of people starting antiretroviral therapy who were tested for hepatitis B	98.3%
	Number of people started on antiretroviral therapy who were tested for hepatitis B during the reporting period using hepatitis B surface antigen tests	524
	Number of people starting antiretroviral therapy during the reporting period	533
10.7. Proportion of people co-infected with HIV and HBV receiving combined treatment (2017)		
	Proportion of people co-infected with HIV and HBV receiving combined treatment	100%
	Number of people co-infected with HIV and HBV who receive treatment with antiretroviral medicines effective against both HIV and HBV during the reporting period	11
	Number of people diagnosed with HIV and HBV coinfection in HIV care during a reporting period (12 months)	11
10.8. Hepatitis C testing (2017)		
	Proportion of people starting antiretroviral therapy who were tested for hepatitis B	94%
	Number of people started on antiretroviral therapy who were tested for hepatitis B during the reporting period using hepatitis B surface antigen tests	501
	Number of people starting antiretroviral therapy during the reporting period	533
10.9. Proportion of people co-infected with HIV and HCV starting HCV treatment (2017)		
	Proportion of people co-infected with HIV and HCV starting HCV treatment	100%
	Number of people diagnosed with HIV and HCV coinfection starting treatment for HCV during a specified time frame	16
	Number of people diagnosed with HIV and HCV coinfection enrolled in HIV care during a specified time period	16