

Jerusalem, April 5, 2012

Government European supplement to the National commitments and policy instrument - Annex from Israel

HIV in Israel exists on 3 different levels: a very low level (incidence rate) of HIV among the general population; an almost concentrated level among IDU and MSM populations, and a generalized one among immigrants, originating mostly in Sub Saharan Africa (OGE). Therefore, our preventive and treatment efforts are implemented through a multifaceted approach for each of these target populations. HIV is in the agenda of many stakeholders in Israel, including at the Ministry of Health here in Israel.

A range of activities are carried out by the MoH in prevention and care. An example of some of these activities are as follows: extensive health care services and ART medications are available to all citizens who are PLWHIV (almost free of charge), procurement of the last generation (fourth) HIV testing for free and confidential testing, social support for PLWHIV, informative and advisory HIV/AIDS and STD hot-line and website, HIV/AIDS prevention campaigns designed for adolescents, MSM, and the general population, Syringe Exchange Program, and more. Only few months ago, the MoH incorporated two new drugs (Prezista and Atripla) in addition to (27 already existing) medications covered in the national basket of health services and medications. Dental services are provided completely free of charge for all HIV children (almost all of whom belong to the OGE risk group). Issues regarding private health insurance and life insurance concern PLWHIV globally. In Israel some progress has been achieved recently. One insurance company offers life insurance policies to PLWHIV, which makes them eligible for a mortgage. We feel that this is a step forward in the right direction.

Stigma surrounding HIV probably still exists in Israel, unfortunately, as in many countries worldwide. The Department of TB and AIDS at the MoH, with the cooperation of various departments within the MoH and a few NGO's, constantly strives to normalize HIV in the mind of the general public and make life better for PLWHIV in Israel, in addition to reducing new infections.

Detailed information regarding Prevention Response (Chapter 4), Migrants (Chapter 5), People who Inject Drugs (Chapter 6), Treatment Care and Support (Chapter 9),

Stigma and discrimination (Chapter 10) are included both in the European questionnaire and in this annex.

Political leadership chapter, question 1:

1. Free of charge testing, counseling and ART are provided to all Israeli citizens, regardless of their risk group or ethnic background.
2. In addition, increased resources are made available for the major high risk groups existing in Israel: Migrants from Ethiopian origins, MSM, IDU, undocumented migrants from countries with generalized epidemic. Some examples (not exhaustive list) are as follows.
3. The MOH has a special team of HIV coordinators for the Ethiopian community. The latter assist the HIV positive Ethiopian patients from the time of diagnosis and throughout their course of treatment, acting as a culturally sensitized bridge between the Ethiopian community and the medical and social/welfare establishments. In addition health education is done on arrival.
4. The MOH initiates and funds special prevention and intervention campaigns for the MSM community together with major NGO from the gay community.
5. The MOH together with the Israeli anti-Drug and Alcohol Authority set up 5 Syringe Exchange Program centers. These provide clean syringes and needles, light snacks and drinks, condoms and support in seeking detox and rehab.
6. The MOH provides free of charge testing for all undocumented migrants. In addition, MOH is providing ART treatment to uninsured foreign pregnant women during pregnancy and 6 months after delivery.
7. The MOH provides infant feeding formula free of charge to HIV positive women, many of which are of small financial means.
8. Prisoners who are HIV positive receive full (and free of charge) medical care from the prison clinic.

Daniel Chemtob, MD, MPH, DEA

Director,

The Department of TB and AIDS,

Ministry of Health,

Jerusalem, ISRAEL

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