

The impact of COVID-19 on HIV in Europe

Since its outbreak in the Spring of 2020 HIV Outcomes has monitored the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on people living with HIV. Studies assessed during the period of the pandemic highlight the significant impact on HIV communities, which are set out in summary below. The articles and reports that helped inform this research have been included at the end of the document.

Impact of COVID-19 & HIV co-infection on mortality



People living with HIV have between a **78%-95% higher risk of death from COVID-19** than the general population and a **20% higher risk of hospitalization**. The risk is higher for people who are **not receiving antiretroviral therapy** or have several **HIV comorbidities**.

Impact of COVID-19 on HIV stakeholders



In the WHO Europe region, **up to 50% of HIV stakeholders stopped face-to-face HIV services** since the beginning of the pandemic and almost **20% reported that users did not use their alternative service arrangements**.

Impact of COVID-19 on HIV care



Up to 70% of HIV clinics were disrupted in WHO Eastern Europe countries with **60% of physicians sharing HIV and COVID-19 care duties**.

Impact of COVID-19 on HIV consultations and enrollments



Case studies across WHO Europe show that **HIV consultations fell by 50% and HIV enrolments by 20%** at the outbreak of the pandemic (April 2020).

Impact of COVID-19 on the vaccination of people living with HIV



People living with HIV were **not prioritised for COVID-19 vaccination in around 60% of countries** in WHO Europe and only **14% had national guidelines for the vaccination of people living with HIV**.

Impact of COVID-19 on HIV diagnosis



In WHO Europe, an estimated **25,143 individuals** living with HIV were **not diagnosed in 2020** because of the pandemic. This resulted in 104,765 new diagnoses in 2020 down from 136,449 in 2019 (a **26% decrease** in HIV diagnoses).

Impact of COVID-19 on HIV testing



Due to the pandemic, an estimated **100,000 HIV tests were not performed** in 2020 among the 8 EU/EEA countries that reported data on testing. * This resulted in 7,500,000 tests in 2020 down from 9,000,000 in 2019 (a **18% decrease** in HIV tests). In the WHO Europe region, an **estimated over 1,000,000 HIV tests were not performed** last year, resulting in 57,000,000 tests in 2020 versus

70,000,000 in 2019 (a **18% decrease**). This is because **60%** of countries in WHO Europe reported a <50% decrease in HIV testing between March-May 2021.

*Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia

Impact of COVID-19 on the mental health of people living with HIV



Case studies across WHO Europe show that around **40% of people living with HIV had mild to severe psychological distress** since the COVID-19 outbreak and had a **need for psychosocial support**. Among this group, **70% reported feeling more depressed and anxious** and **19% considering suicide**.

Impact of COVID-19 on HIV treatment



Case studies across WHO Europe show that **4% of people living with HIV (approximately 60,000) reported an interruption of ART** due to lockdowns and **that 6% (around 120,000) were unable to go collect ART** due to mobility restrictions. Around **30% of people living with HIV in WHO Europe had to adapt their HIV care** during the pandemic, facilitating an increase in the use of telehealth services. In addition, some EU countries experienced **shortages in HIV medicines and the discontinuation of PrEP** programmes. *

*Romania, Italy, Portugal, Ireland

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