

HIV in Ukraine: Operational Program

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More than 6 million people have been displaced across the border since the Russian invasion of Ukraine began. The European Union Council has adopted a Temporary Protection Directive that provides an adequate response by granting the right to immediate protection, including the right to receive medical assistance: Access to medical care for Ukrainian refugees living with HIV.

Before the war began, an estimated 260,000 people were living with HIV in Ukraine.

The incidence of tuberculosis (TB) in Ukraine has decreased significantly over the past 15 years. It has decreased from over 127 cases per 100,000 in 2002-2005 to 42.2 cases in 2020 from per 100,000.

In 2021, 240,000 Ukrainians are HIV positive, 100,000 of them currently live in areas affected by the fighting.

Ukraine is one of the countries with the highest tuberculosis rate.

Tuberculosis is one of the most likely causes of death in people living with HIV.

The war risked making it difficult for patients to access HIV and tuberculosis drugs. 3,39 treatment facilities were closed and HIV testing suspended.

In Kharkiv, Mariupol, access to diagnostics, including CD4 and viral load testing, has been completely suspended.

The total number of people living with HIV who started antiretroviral therapy in 2022 decreased by 30% compared to the same period in 2021.

According to recent data collected as part of the 2022 Dublin Proclamation Survey, an estimated 75% of 244,000 people living with HIV in Ukraine were diagnosed and 62% were on ART, 58% were virally suppressed.

HIV self-testing can be used when patient privacy and discretion are not respected. In addition, precautions should be taken after or in parallel with the test, especially for those who are at risk of HIV infection upon arrival. Recent modeling studies have shown that a significant proportion of HIV infections occur among migrants and other displaced persons in destination countries. It is therefore important that HIV programs provide prevention and other support services, including HIV pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP and PEP), harm reduction and condom distribution, adapted to the needs of the population [1].

Bibliography

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