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# Results for adolescents

## ENDING THE ADOLESCENT AIDS EPIDEMIC

### Data on adolescents aged 10–19 years and HIV is inadequate

Routine data collection on adolescents and HIV is scarce in Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA), and information on 10–14 year olds is especially lacking. Some countries, like Zimbabwe, are now introducing systematic electronic data collection to inform and improve HIV services for adolescents. Generating timely data can help to drive the increased national and international resources needed to end adolescent AIDS.

### More than 60 per cent of all adolescents worldwide who are living with HIV are in ESA

About 1.2 million adolescents in ESA are living with HIV. Around 20 per cent of these live in South Africa, which also accounts for around 12 per cent of all adolescents with HIV worldwide. Five other countries in the region have more than 100,000 adolescents living with HIV (Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe).<sup>i</sup>

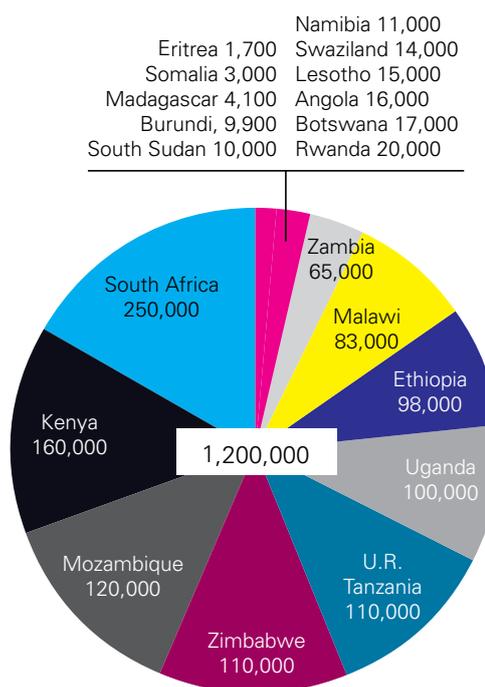
### The number of adolescents dying as a result of AIDS tripled between 2000 and 2014

Unlike other age groups, AIDS-related deaths have not decreased among adolescents aged 10–19 years. AIDS is the number one killer of adolescents in the region. In all, more than 35,000 adolescents in ESA are reported to have died of AIDS-related illnesses in 2014. This represented more than half of all adolescent deaths worldwide in that year that were linked with AIDS.<sup>ii</sup> Most of these deaths were among adolescents who had been living with HIV since birth, and were deaths that could have been avoided with appropriate treatment.<sup>iii</sup> Only one third of children under 14 years who are living with HIV are receiving treatment.<sup>iv</sup>

### About 100,000 adolescents between 15–19 years were newly infected with HIV during 2014

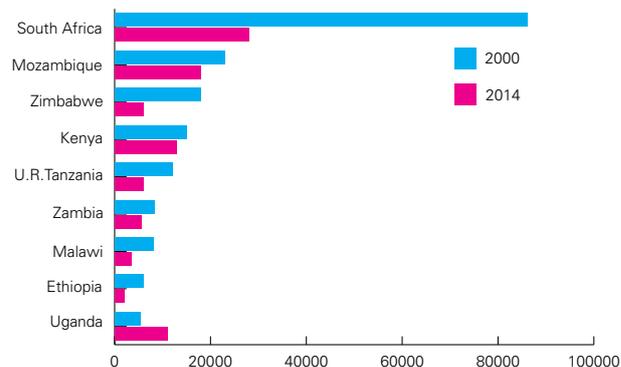
New infections among 15–19 year olds in 2014 were almost 50 per cent lower than the estimated number of new infections for this age group in 2000.<sup>v</sup> While significant, the decline in infection rates is slower among adolescents than in other popula-

### Estimated number of adolescents aged 10–19 years in ESA living with HIV, 2014



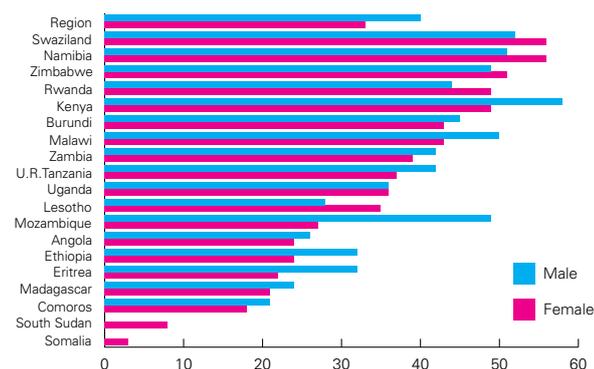
Source: UNICEF 2015, Children and AIDS Statistical Update.

### Decline in new infections among adolescents 10–19 years in 2000 and in 2014 in high-burden ESA countries



Source: UNICEF 2015, Children and AIDS Statistical Update.

## Percentage of adolescents (15–19 years) with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV, 2010–2014



Source: UNICEF 2015, Children and AIDS Statistical Update.

tions. In ESA, the reduction was primarily due to advances in South Africa, which saw a reduction in new infections of more than 67 per cent. Uganda was the only country in the region to see a higher number of new infections among older adolescents in 2014, compared with 2000.<sup>vi</sup>

### About 7 in 10 new infections in 15–19 year olds in sub-Saharan Africa were among girls<sup>vii</sup>

Girls appear to be at higher risk of HIV than boys, although there are significant variations between countries. Gender-based violence may increase HIV vulnerability. In five countries, more than 40 per cent of ever-married girls aged 15–19 years experienced physical violence (Zimbabwe, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi and Zambia).<sup>viii</sup> In the same countries about one in six adolescent girls aged 15–19 years had experienced sexual violence. Among girls under 15 years who have had sexual intercourse, 28 per cent in Zimbabwe, 18 per cent in Malawi and 11 per cent in Tanzania reported their first sex was forced. First sexual intercourse was also reported to be forced among 23 per cent of girls aged 15–19 years in Zimbabwe, 14 per cent in Malawi and 11 per cent in Tanzania.<sup>ix</sup>

### Data from a dozen ESA countries indicates that more than 40 per cent of ESA adolescents aged 15–19 years have had sexual intercourse, many without protecting themselves against HIV infection<sup>x</sup>

National surveys indicate that around 40 per cent of adolescents have had sexual intercourse by the time they reach 19 years, yet most lack knowledge of the risks of HIV or of how to protect themselves. Only about 33 per cent of adolescent

girls and 40 per cent boys aged 15–19 have comprehensive, correct knowledge of HIV – and this has barely changed in 15 years. Among those who had multiple sexual partners in the previous year, only about 28 per cent of girls and 44 per cent of boys aged 15–19 years said that they used a condom during last sexual intercourse.<sup>xi</sup>

### Few adolescents are aware of their HIV status

Across the region, only 22 per cent of adolescent girls and 16 per cent of boys aged 15–19 years had taken an HIV test and received the results during the previous 12 months.<sup>xii</sup>

### Accelerating action now to end adolescent AIDS is essential to achieve the larger goal of ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030

Adolescents demand our attention. They represent a quarter of the population in ESA, they are the only age group among whom deaths from AIDS-related causes are not declining, and they are not accessing treatment, care and prevention services at the pace they should be. Proven interventions to prevent HIV infections and keep adolescents who are living with HIV alive and healthy exist. Governments have made numerous commitments to ending the AIDS epidemic. But now specific attention, focus and investment are needed on a group that has been left behind in the AIDS response — adolescent boys and girls.

### Proven strategies for reducing adolescent AIDS

- Improve routine data collection on adolescents and HIV
- Scale up Combination Prevention, including high-impact interventions, such as increasing access to condoms, prevention of mother-to-child transmission, and appropriate, comprehensive sexuality education for all adolescents
- Ensure health and HIV services meet the needs of adolescents by ensuring they are consulted
- End stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV and AIDS

i-vii UNAIDS 2015, *HIV and AIDS Estimates 2014*, <http://childrenandaids.org/situation>  
viii UNAIDS et al., 2015 *All-In @EndAdolescentAids Country Factsheets*, <http://www.allintoendadolescentaids.org>

ix DHS Surveys, Malawi (2010), Tanzania (2010), Zimbabwe (2010-11).

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xi UNAIDS 2015, *HIV and AIDS Estimates 2014*, <http://childrenandaids.org/situation>

xii UNAIDS 2015, *HIV and AIDS Estimates 2014*, <http://childrenandaids.org/situation>