WHO works with countries and partners to ensure uptake and implementation of policies to strengthen the provision of services to prevent and treat sexually transmitted infections and their sequelae in support of achieving the goals outlined in the global health sector strategies on HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections for the period 2022–2030 (1).

WHO tracks the dissemination, policy change and implementation of these recommendations through the Global AIDS Monitoring reporting tool. In addition, related data are collected through the WHO Global Gonococcal Antimicrobial Surveillance Programme (GASP), the Global Antimicrobial Resistance and Use Surveillance System (GLASS), the WHO/UNICEF Joint Reporting Form on Immunization, WHO surveys and routine communication with WHO country and regional offices.

This fact sheet provides a summary of the adoption and implementation status of key policies by July 2023.

- WHO provides guidance and encourages countries to develop national strategies or action plans for preventing and controlling sexually transmitted infections. Among the countries reporting to Global AIDS Monitoring, 81% (85 of 104) reported having a national strategy or action plan for preventing and controlling sexually transmitted infections. In addition, another 16 countries reported having a national strategic plan in a survey conducted by WHO in 2019–2020 assessing country implementation of the WHO global health sector strategy for sexually transmitted infections, 2016–2021 (2).

- In 2021, WHO released guidelines for managing symptomatic sexually transmitted infections (3) and is currently developing consolidated guidelines on sexually transmitted infection prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care that will include updated treatment recommendations. Among the countries reporting to Global AIDS Monitoring, 95% (94 of 99) reported having national treatment guidelines, and of these 43% (40 of 94) reported being updated in 2020 or later and 67% updated in 2018 or later (63 of 94).

- WHO is implementing the global action plan to control the spread and impact of antimicrobial resistance in Neisseria gonorrhoeae. Among the countries reporting to Global AIDS Monitoring, 28% (26 of 94) reported monitoring gonococcal antimicrobial resistance annually and 14% (13 of 94) reported monitoring less than annually. In addition, 68 countries reported data on antimicrobial resistance in N. gonorrhoeae into GASP or GLASS in 2019 or 2020, of whom 40 had not reported to Global AIDS Monitoring.

- WHO recommends using dual HIV and syphilis rapid diagnostic tests for pregnant women in antenatal care and for key populations, with 76 countries adopting dual HIV and syphilis rapid diagnostic tests in national policies. More than half of the countries reporting dual HIV and syphilis rapid diagnostic tests policies (62%, 47 of 76) adopted them for both pregnant women and key populations, with the remainder for pregnant women only (26%, 20 of 76) or for key populations only (12%, 9 of 76).

- WHO provides guidance to eliminate the vertical transmission of HIV, hepatitis B and syphilis (4), tracks country status and provides technical support. Of all reporting countries, 74% have national plans for eliminating the vertical transmission of both HIV and syphilis (91 of 123), most of which are integrated, and a further 17% have a plan for eliminating the vertical transmission of either HIV (12 countries) or syphilis (nine countries).

- HPV (human papillomavirus) vaccination is the most cost-effective public health measure against cervical cancer. The global strategy to accelerate the elimination of cervical cancer as a public health problem (5) recommends vaccination for girls before the age of 15 years. A total of 131 WHO Member States (68%) have included HPV vaccine in their national immunization schedule and three have reported partial introduction of the vaccine.
References

National strategy or action plan for the prevention and control of sexually transmitted infections, as of July 2023


National treatment guidelines or recommendations for sexually transmitted infections, as of July 2023

Sources: Global AIDS Monitoring (UNAIDS/WHO/UNICEF) and WHO Department of Global HIV, Hepatitis and Sexually Transmitted Infections Programmes, 2023.
Monitoring of gonococcal antimicrobial resistance, as of July 2023

Uptake of national policies on dual HIV and syphilis rapid diagnostic tests, as of July 2023
National plan for eliminating the vertical transmission of HIV and syphilis, as of July 2023

Introduction status of HPV (human papillomavirus) vaccine in national immunization programmes, as of July 2023

Sources: Global AIDS Monitoring (UNAIDS/WHO/UNICEF) and WHO Department of Global HIV, Hepatitis and Sexually Transmitted Infections Programmes, 2023.


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