

WHAT THE DATA TELL US: Projections for the HIV epidemic in western and central Africa in 2030

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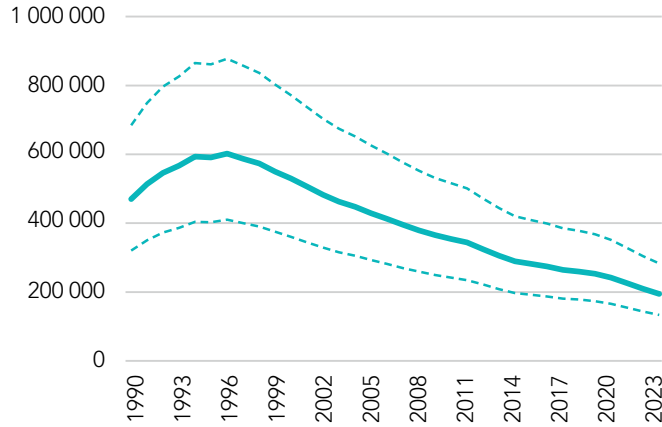
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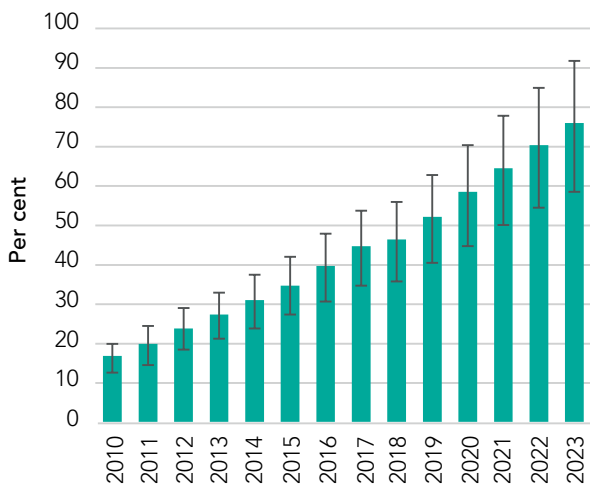
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Where are we now?

Number of new HIV infections, 1990–2023



Treatment coverage, 2010–2023

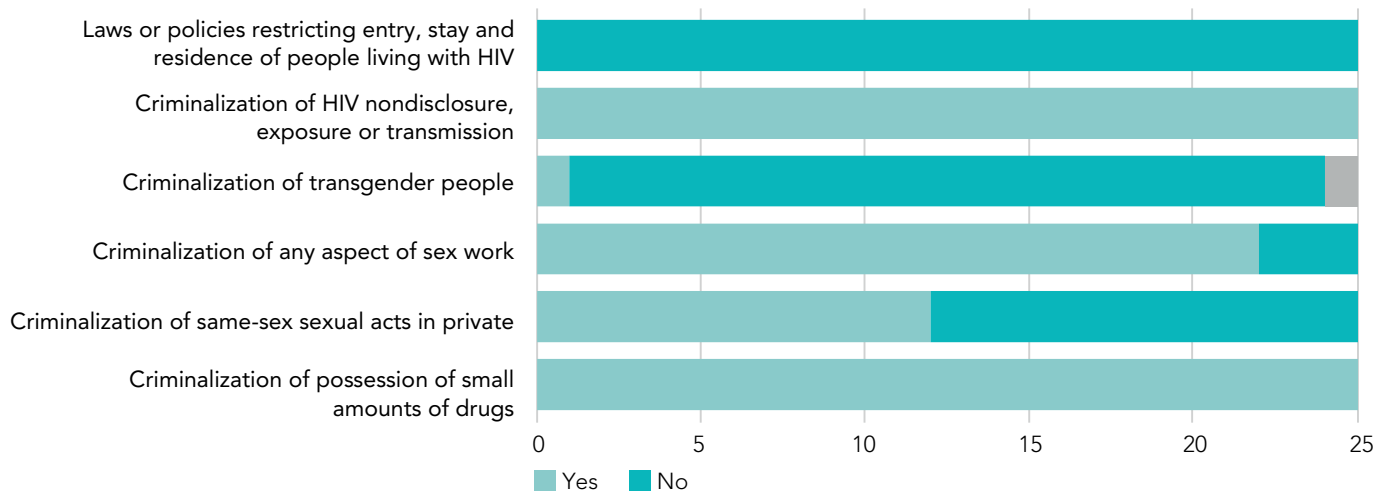


New HIV infections have decreased by 46% since 2010, falling to 190 000 (130 000–280 000) in 2023 in western and central Africa. Antiretroviral treatment coverage among people living with HIV reached 76% (59–92%) in 2023, steadily progressing towards the treatment targets target set for 2025.¹ Treatment coverage among children living with HIV is lagging far behind adults at only 35%.

Out of 25 reporting countries, 22 countries still criminalize sex work, all 25 countries criminalize possession of small amounts of drugs and HIV nondisclosure, exposure or transmission, and 12 criminalize same-sex sexual acts. These persisting discriminatory and punitive laws expose certain communities to stigma, discrimination and violence and lead to poor health outcomes. In Ghana, stigma and discrimination in the past 6 months were reportedly experienced by: 31% of transgender people and 32% in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; 30% of people who inject drugs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; 32% of gay men and other men who have sex with men in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and 23% in Burkina Faso; and 35% of sex workers in Burkina Faso and 33% in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

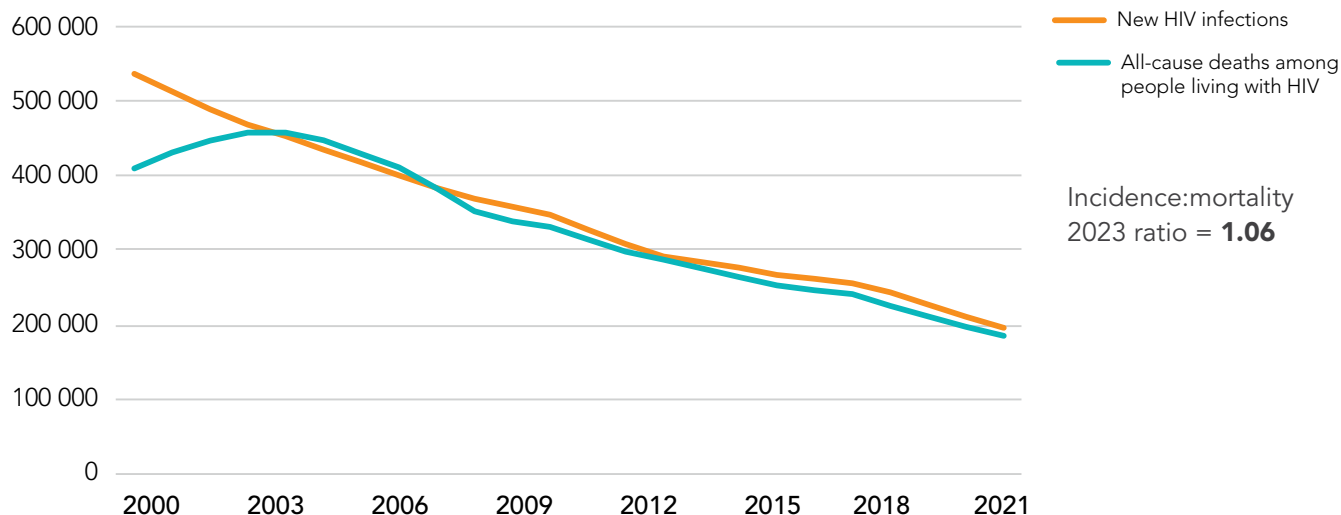
¹ Note: the 2025 targets are for 95% of people living with HIV to know their HIV status, 95% of these people to be receiving HIV treatment, and 95% of these people to have viral suppression. For further explanation see https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/progress-towards-95-95-95_en.pdf

Number of countries with HIV-related discriminatory and punitive laws, 2024



What factors might contribute to epidemic control?

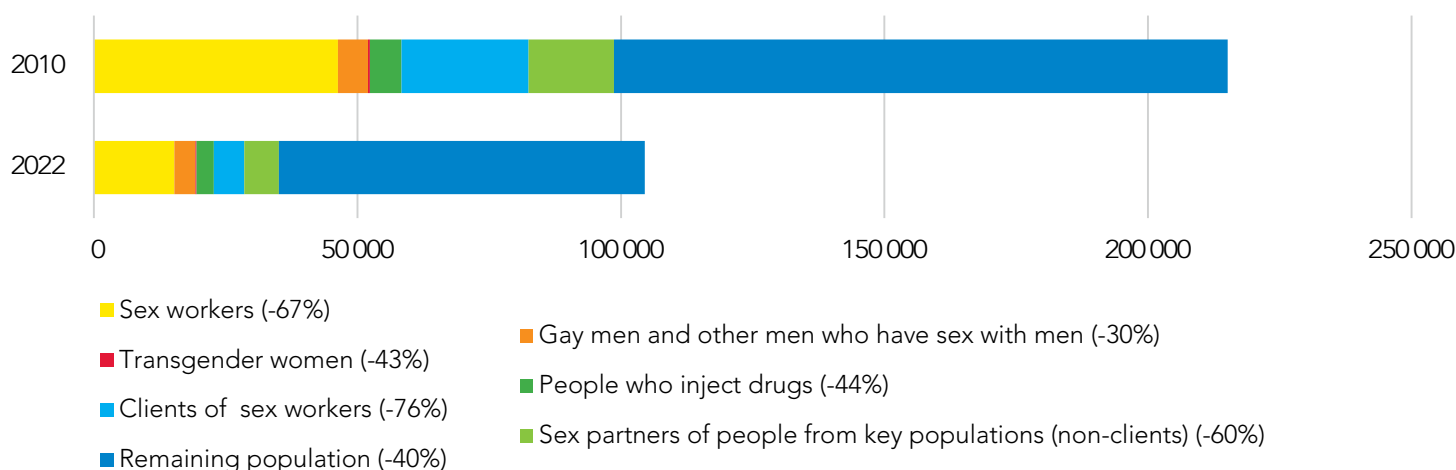
Estimated HIV incidence to mortality ratio, 2000–2023



An estimated incidence:mortality ratio (IMR) of 1.06, which is very close to the benchmark of 1, indicates that the population of people living with HIV has stabilized. This ratio suggests that new infections are slightly outpacing deaths, underscoring the continuous need to boost and sustain prevention interventions, including ensuring people living with HIV receive treatment. When the IMR is less than 1, the size of the population living with HIV decreases, contracting the epidemic and lowering costs of antiretroviral therapy and services.

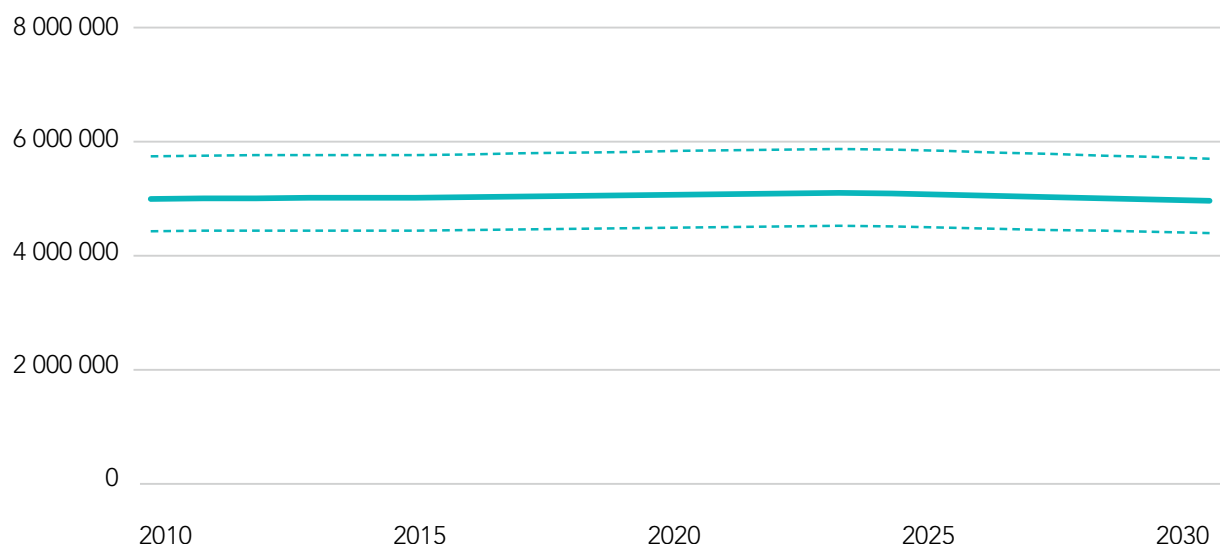
Prevention interventions are particularly important among vulnerable populations, such as adolescent girls and young women who accounted for 19% of all new HIV infections in the region in 2023. Though HIV incidence has declined among key populations, it is declining at much slower rates among gay men and other men who have sex with men.

Distribution of new HIV infections and the percentage change among adults, 2010 and 2022

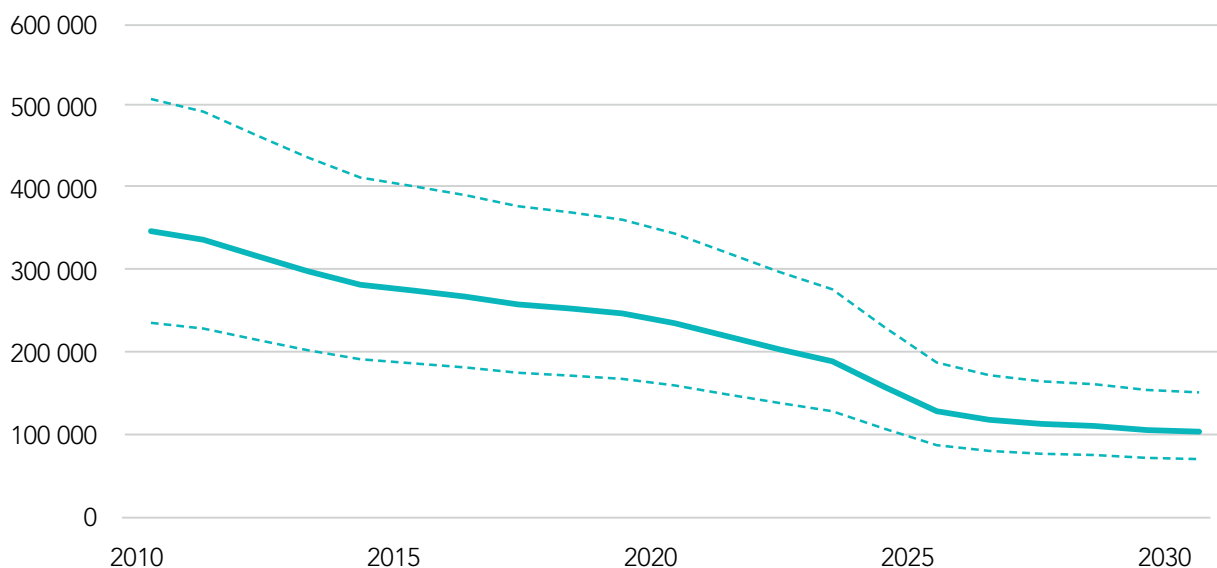


What is projected to happen in the future if coverage remains at 2023 level for treatment and prevention

Projections of numbers of people living with HIV by 2030

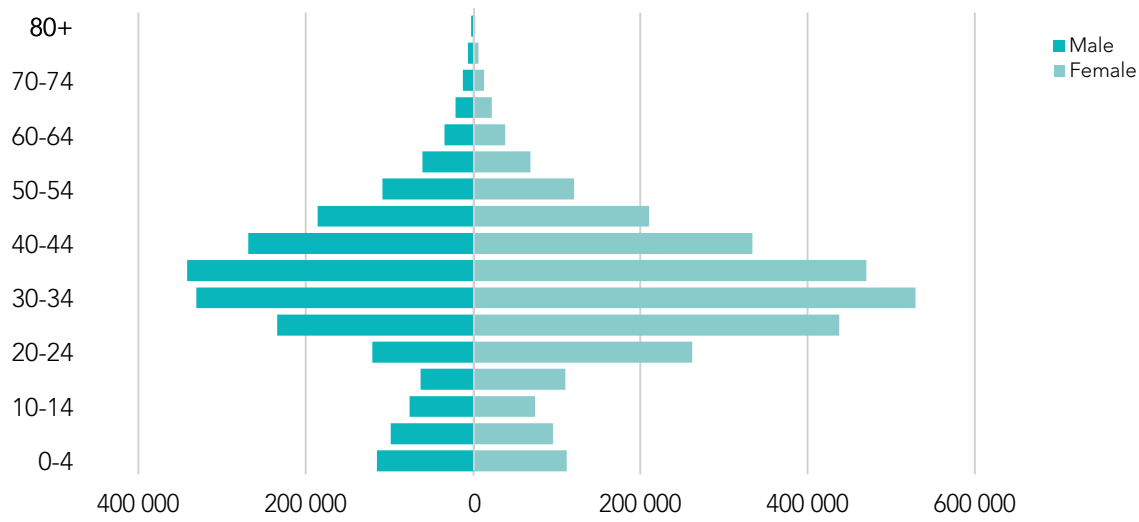


Projections of numbers of new HIV infections by 2030

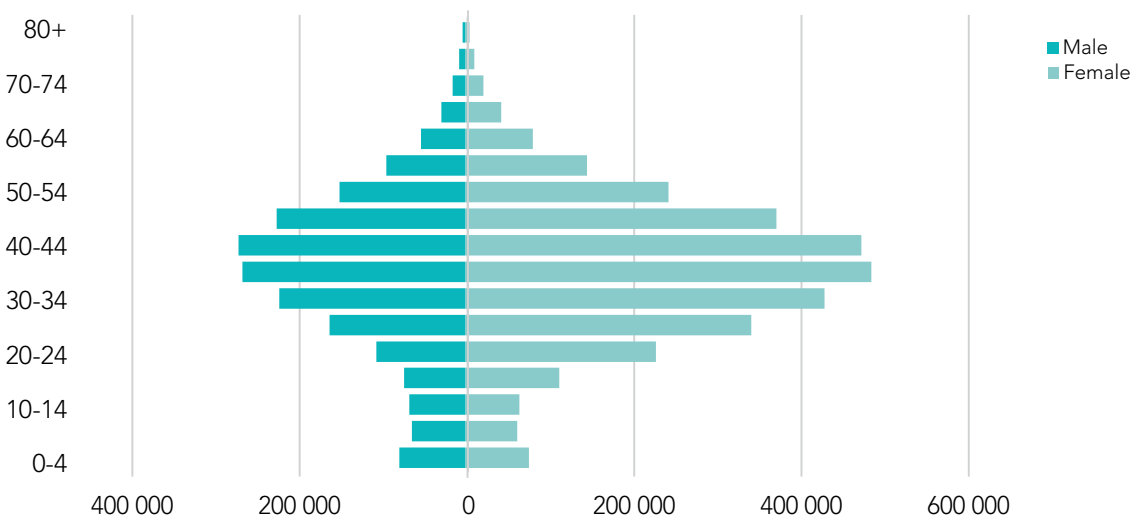


By 2030, without accelerated scale-up of prevention and treatment coverage, there may be an estimated 100 000 new HIV infections and 5.0 million people living with HIV in western and central Africa. The population of people living with HIV is projected to age considerably. In 2030, people older than 40 years will account for almost two-thirds (60%) of all people living with HIV in the region. The proportion of elderly people aged 60+ years among all people living with HIV in the region is projected to increase from 5% in 2020 to 11% in 2030. Gender disparity among people living with HIV is projected to increase, with girls and women accounting for 65% of people living with HIV in the region by 2030.

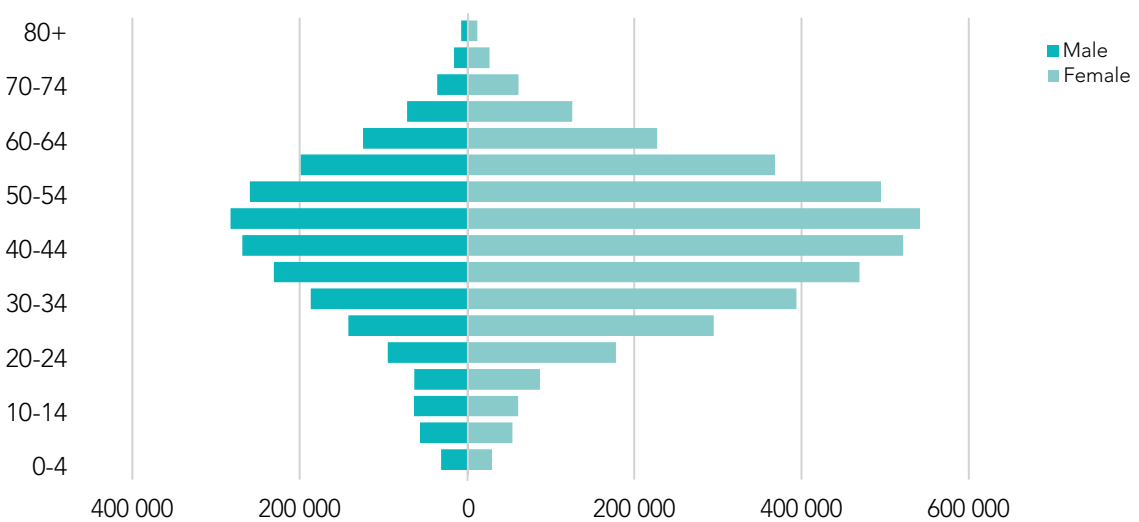
Age distribution of people living with HIV, 2010



Age distribution of people living with HIV, 2020



Age distribution of people living with HIV, 2030



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