

Ending the HIV treatment crisis



A regional initiative for increasing
access to antiretroviral therapy in
the Eastern Mediterranean Region



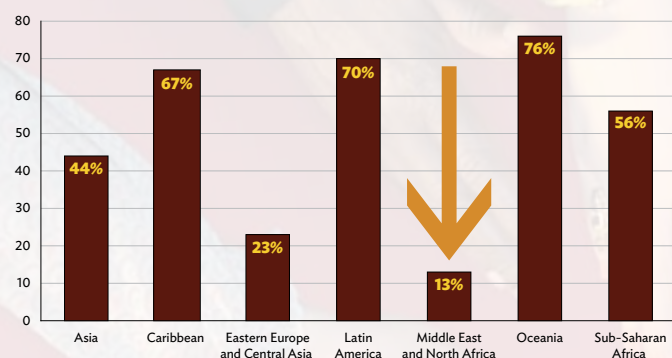
**World Health
Organization**

Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean

The crisis

By the end of 2011 coverage of people living with HIV with antiretroviral therapy was less than 14% for the Region as a whole. This is by far the lowest coverage globally.

Coverage of antiretroviral therapy, low- and middle-income countries by region, 2011



“More than 85% of people who need life-saving antiretroviral therapy in the Eastern Mediterranean region do not receive it. This should end now”.

“With strong ownership, political will and the right policies and strategies in place, governments can end the HIV treatment crisis”.

Dr Ala Alwan

WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean

HIV treatment is vitally important to people living with HIV. It delays the progression of the disease, improves quality of life and increases life expectancy.

Treatment also has public health benefits. A person who has been successfully treated is less likely to transmit the infection to others.

All countries of the Region have made commendable efforts to make antiretroviral therapy available to those who need it. The number of people who are receiving treatment has been increasing steadily.

However, the growing number of new HIV infections is adding constantly to the unmet need for treatment. As a result, deaths due to HIV infection are still growing.

The low antiretroviral therapy coverage is the result of an accumulation of gaps in the current HIV control strategies and programmes in the Region.

The regional initiative

The WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean calls for renewed commitment and urgent action to End the HIV Treatment Crisis in the Region

All countries should ensure that:

- People living with HIV have easy access to HIV testing in order to know their HIV status
- People who are diagnosed with HIV are linked to and retained in care
- People in need of life saving antiretroviral therapy are getting it
- People who receive antiretroviral therapy are retained in quality lifelong care and treatment