



IN NEW DECADE, HOW UZBEKISTAN IS DEALING WITH HIV AND AIDS?

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ABSTRACT

This article briefly introduces HIV prevention and its transmission factors. It analyzes how the fight against AIDS and HIV is being fought in Uzbekistan and the whole world, and how the fight against it is increasing as the number of HIV patients increases.

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome or better known as AIDS is a life-threatening disease. It is one of the most dreaded diseases of the 21st century. AIDS is caused by HIV or Human Immunodeficiency Virus, which attacks the immune system of the human body. HIV is transmitted through sexual fluids (vaginal and semen), blood, breast milk, and vertically (mother to child). In 2015, 94% of infections were attributed to sexual contact; 70% were male to male (including those at dual risk with a male to male sexual contact and IVDU risk), and 24% were heterosexually transmitted. Medication therapy for both mother and child during pregnancy, childbirth, and postnatally has reduced the mother-to-child transmission rate to less than 1%. Breast milk can transmit HIV to the child. Using infant formula, which is readily available in the United States in place of breast milk, eliminates that risk. In addition, rapid HIV testing at the time of delivery in high-incidence areas has proven to further reduce transmission. The healthcare system has effectively instituted testing of all blood products to nearly eliminate transmission between patients through the blood. Universal precautions for health care workers have been widely accepted to decrease occupational exposure. Occupational exposures do occur, and effective post-exposure prophylaxis (oPEP) reduces the risk of infection. Effective post-exposure prophylaxis is a 28-day course of antiretrovirals when the risk of HIV is considered significant within 24 to 72 hours of exposure. Persons who inject drugs (PWID), such as heroin, are at very high risk of being infected with HIV. Substance abuse clouds judgment, and often there is needle sharing among HIV positive and HIV negative individuals. In areas with a high prevalence of PWID, syringe service programs (SSPs) are shown to be very effective.

It has, so far, ended more than twenty-nine million lives all over the world. Since its discovery, AIDS has spread around the world like a wildfire. It is due to the continuous efforts of the Government and non-government organizations. AIDS awareness has been spread to the masses. Currently, HIV and AIDS, which is a global issue, has not left Uzbekistan. In 2014,



The Joint United Nations Program on HIV and AIDS has set an ambitious target code-named 90-90-90, which aims to ensure that 90% of all people living with HIV will know their state, 90% of all people diagnosed will receive sustained antiretroviral therapy, and 90% of all people receiving ART will have viral suppression by 2020. Since 2014, many tests and treatment programs have been developed to achieve the above goals worldwide. In 2019, it was reported that many developed countries can reach the target with the right strategies, as well as regions that are still far from the targets. It has been reported that the fourth 90 should be one of the targets related to HIV infection in recent years. This view, beyond virological suppression, was towards developing programs that would enable people living with HIV to live not only longer but also healthy. The socio-cultural and economic obstacles to reach the targets may vary according to geographical regions, but it is clear that COVID-19 disease, which has taken the whole world under the influence since 2019, is a major obstacle to the 90-90-90 targets worldwide. Difficulties in the diagnosis and access to ART and treatment nonadherence which may be encountered more frequently due to many factors may threaten both the health of people living with HIV and public health. Considering COVID-19 disease and future epidemics that may create a chaotic environment, analyzing the difficulties experienced in the pandemic retrospectively, and determining new strategies that will bring appropriate solutions to the problems will play an important role in the proper management of future issue. This strategy also attracted to Uzbekistan. In 2023, First of January, it is changed to 95%-95%-95% and signed by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev. In particular, in 2023-2027, at the expense of the state budget funds, funds from the Global Fund to fight AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, loans from the Asian Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructural Investment Bank, early detection, diagnosis and extensive promotion of HIV infection among the population, as well as other funds in the amount of 120 billion soums and 54 million US dollars will be allocated for organizational activities. By 2027, it will be ensured that the rate of HIV-infected persons who know their status, who are covered by special treatment courses, and whose viral load in their blood drops to the level of undetectable viral load will reach 95%. The change from 90% to 95% in Strategy is due to the increasing to high rate. According to UzA, there are currently 45,000 people living with HIV in Uzbekistan. Of these, 55% are men and 45% are women. Of the total, 14% are children under the age of 18. Most HIV-infected people live in Tashkent and the Tashkent region. It should be recalled that in November 2019, the former director of the Agency for Sanitary and Epidemiological Welfare under the Ministry of Health, the chief state sanitary doctor Bakhrom Almatov, reported that more than 4,000 people are diagnosed with AIDS every year in Uzbekistan. Based on the President's decision, the tasks of developing mechanisms for involuntary medical examination of persons suspected of being infected with HIV/AIDS, identified in special operational and preventive measures carried out by internal affairs bodies, at the expense of budget funds. The procedure for involuntary medical examination of persons suspected of being infected with HIV/AIDS identified during special operational and preventive measures carried out by internal affairs bodies is approved at the expense of the state budget. As well as, Some non-government non-profit organisations were enlisted to 95%-95%-95% target of Ministry of Health's strategies and Fight against HIV epidemic Centers. The most active of non-



governmental non-profit organization is "Istiqbolli Avlod" is operating with AIDS centres of Uzbekistan. The process is probably held with volunteers who service to "Istiqbolli Avlod".

Volunteers find key groups wandering in active streets and dirty places, and talk to them privately or openly according to their wishes. They are thought what are the HIV, AIDS, hepatitis B-C, syphilis, malaria, tuberculosis, preventive measures against COVID-19 and others will be carried out. Protective equipment for sexual contact and HIV express test, face masks financed by the World Health Organization will be distributed to them, they will be taught how to use them, and an express test for HIV will be conducted with secret codes. If the answer is positive, clients are immediately persuaded to go to the AIDS center to get tested anonymously. It is very difficult to persuade clients to take the test. The reason is that they have a fear of stigma and discrimination, which makes it difficult for volunteers. Some clients who are prostitutes, MSMs, and addicts withdraw themselves when talking with volunteers. Some of them prefer to go to the AIDS center alone, that is, without volunteer references, and they disappear from sight for a long time, telling the volunteers that they will go alone and do not go to take the test. This is a great danger to themselves and to the society. For preventive purposes, visiting old buildings and under uninhabited bridges is a hope that they will meet the same clients, and they will even meet them. In the interviews to explain that not harming them is actually their refuge, the volunteers often say that the fleeing clients are afraid of harming themselves. and it is a sign that there is not enough information about HIV and AIDS among the society. Therefore, volunteers are professionals in their work. They prepare the client psychologically before taking the test. Under any circumstances, they have nothing to lose, they explain that if the result is positive, they can live as long as healthy people with ART, or if the result is negative, they will take the test every 3 months under the eyes of the volunteers. People's understanding of these key groups makes them separate from society. In the situation, the psychological education and experience of the volunteer remains. That is why the organizations organize training and seminars for volunteers every 3 months. During the training, experienced doctors and psychologists teach the volunteers. In order to warn the society, volunteers usually visit to state universities schools and other public places to reach the target in 95-95-95%.

The new targets for 2025 build on the progress made since 2015 and represent ambitious short-term goals. Achieving these targets would bring us close to the goals of reducing new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths by 90% between 2015 and 2030. By 2025, global new infections and AIDS deaths would drop to 4.4 and 3.9 per 100,000 population, and the number of people living with HIV (PLHIV) would be declining. There would be 45000 people on treatment, and they would need continuing support for their lifetime. Incidence for the total global population would be below 0.15% everywhere. The number of PLHIV would start declining by 2025.

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