

Dettaglio abstract

N. pgm: OC 68

Title: Estimation of the proportion of people living with HIV in ART and virally suppressed, using surveillance and cohort data. Italy, 2012-2019

Presentation type: Oral Communication

Session/Topic

Epidemiology / Social Sciences IV

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Abstract

Background: The progress of the United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) "90-90-90" target needs to be systematically monitored. To this purpose, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) carried out projects to implement standardized methodologies to obtain such estimate, relying on public health surveillance data and HIV study cohorts.

Our aim was to estimate, for the years 2012-2019, based on an approach already published (Gourlay et al. CID 2017; <https://doi.org/10.1093/cid/cix212>), the last two 90s, that is the proportion of people living with HIV (PLHIV) who: ever initiated ART and was virally suppressed.

Material and Methods: According to the methodology used, PLHIV whoever initiated ART were defined as ever treated, regardless of treatment guidelines, antiretroviral drug regimens or number of drugs, treatment interruptions or discontinuations, and subjects having at the last visit of the year a viral load ≤ 200 copies/mL as virally suppressed. We used data from ICONA Foundation cohort study, weighted using official data obtained from Italian National HIV surveillance system in order to adjust for the different distribution of age, sex, country of origin, transmission mode, and CD4 cell count at diagnosis. The methodology used allowed the production of high and low estimates (when considering or not those lost to follow-up) and preferred estimates were the mid-point between the high and low estimates.

Results: Preferred estimate of proportion of PLHIV ever treated increased steadily from 74.6% in 2012, to 93.4% in 2019 (Fig.1 A). Notwithstanding a moderate lower proportion on ART among males and foreign born PLHIV in the first years, from 2017 onwards this target was reached without difference according to country of origin and gender. Regarding transmission mode, only people who inject drugs (PWID) had a wide range estimate, and the preferred estimate never reached the 90%. Among PLHIV ever treated, the preferred estimate of PLHIV virally suppressed increased overall from 86.6% in 2012 to 92.3% in 2019 (Fig.1B), reaching the 90% target starting from 2015. However lower proportions of virally suppressed were found for females and foreign born PLHIV and, again, for PWID who never reached the 90% target.

Conclusions: In Italy, global estimate of the last two UNAIDS targets, increased steadily from 2012 to 2019. The achievement of the 90% of PLHIV ever treated seems assured from 2017 onwards and of virally suppressed PLHIV from 2015 onwards. Only the proportions for PWID reaching the two outcomes remained lower than 90% throughout the entire period examined, and the proportion of virally suppressed in females, foreign born and PWID still needs to be improved to reach the 90% target. Our finding suggests an overall effective ART coverage but the need of public efforts toward retention in care of selected subpopulations.

Project funded by Minister of Health - CCM.

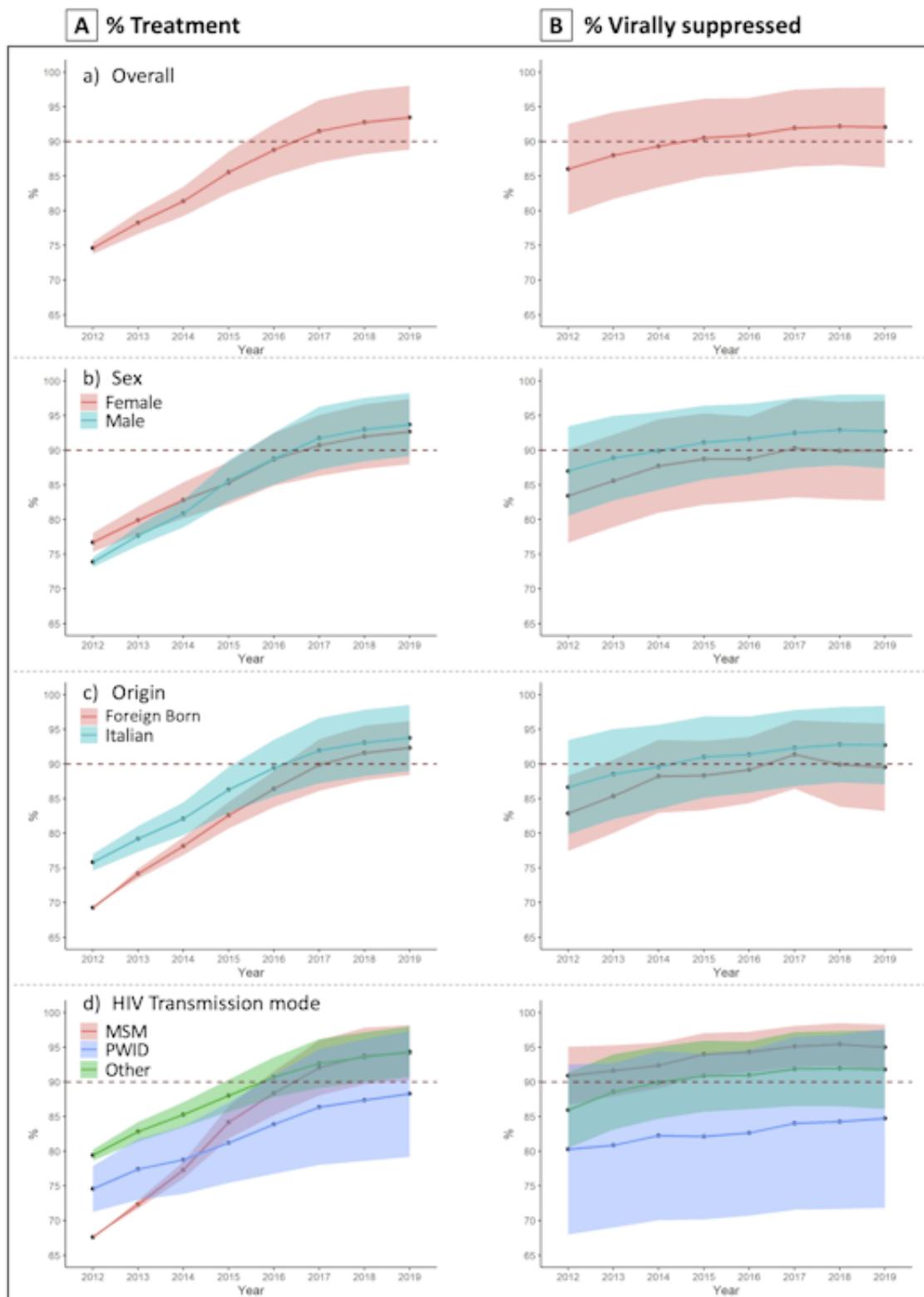


Fig 1. Estimated percentage of people living with HIV ever treated (Panel A) and virally suppressed (Panel B) and their range of low and high estimate (including or excluding lost to follow-up, respectively), by calendar year and for: a) overall patients, b) sex, c) country of origin, d) HIV transmission mode. 90% target is highlighted by red dashed lines. MSM: men who have sex with men; PWID: people who inject drugs.