

KEY FACTS ON HIV EPIDEMIC IN LATVIA AND PROGRESS IN 2011

(pop. 2 041 763)

In Latvia, the first HIV case was reported in 1987. By the end of 2011, Latvia had reported a cumulative total of 5 192 HIV cases to the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC); it also reported that 1 068 of the infected individuals had developed AIDS, including 447 who had died. For the year 2011, the country reported 299 new HIV cases, 106 new AIDS cases and 80 deaths among AIDS cases. The rate of newly diagnosed HIV infections in 2011 was 13.4 per 100 000 population. Of the newly reported cases with a known gender in 2011, 65% were male. Among the new HIV infections in 2011 for which the mode of transmission was known (85.6%), 56.3% were infected through heterosexual contact, 35.2% through injecting drug use, 7.8% through sex between men and 0.8% through mother-to-child transmission. Latvia has reported a cumulative total of 41 mother-to-child transmission cases, including 2 in 2011.

Taking undiagnosed infections into account, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and WHO estimate that 9 100 (6 500 – 13 000) people were living with HIV in Latvia at the end of 2011 and that less than 1 000 people died from AIDS-related causes during 2011.

All prisoners in Latvia are tested for HIV upon entering prison. In addition, HIV testing is systematically offered to people who inject drugs, sex-workers and in circumstances of adoption and is required for military recruits and blood and tissue donors. HIV testing and counselling is available at all medical facilities in the country. Testing is provided free of charge at 12 specialized HIV low threshold centres for people who inject drugs. In 2011, 58 799 HIV tests were performed. The number of people receiving antiretroviral therapy (ART) increased from 87 in 2002 to 560 by December 2011. ART coverage in 2010, based on 2010 WHO guidelines, was 27% (range 23%-32%).

Some changes in national response to the AIDS epidemic in Latvia have been made during the period January 2010 – December 2011. By the end of 2009, opioid substitution therapy (OST) was available only in 2 cities in Latvia – in Riga and Jelgava. By the end of 2011 OST was available in 10 cities in Latvia. Since January 2010, all antiretroviral medicines have been included on the reimbursable list and qualify for 100% reimbursement. Moreover, decentralization of treatment has occurred. Since January 2010, people on ART can now get treatment from local infectious diseases specialists in 7 cities of Latvia and it is possible to get ART from any pharmacy with a contract with the National Health Service.

Sources:

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