

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) in GCC Countries: Current Status and Future prospects

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Outline



**Background
on Regional
Estimates HIV and
STIs**



**Historical Burden of
STIs in GCC
Countries**



**The way forward
towards to control and
elimination of STIs?**



**Summary &
Conclusions**



- Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are infections that are *passed from person to person through sexual contact*.
- 25 STIs that are mainly spread by sexual contact through vaginal, anal, and oral sex
- HIV is a STI
- People living with HIV may also be *at greater risk* of getting or passing on other STIs

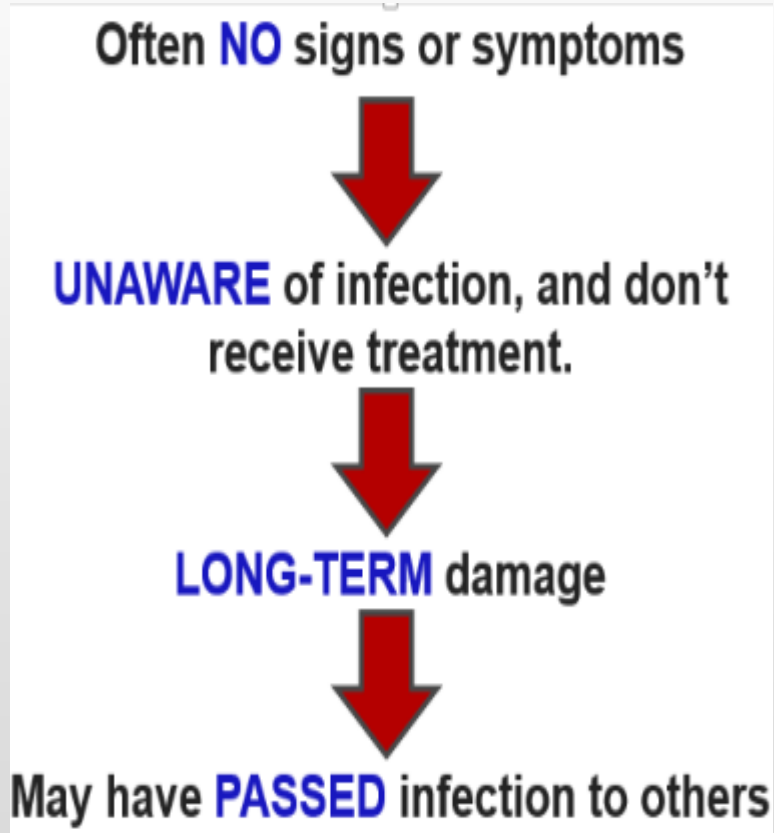
Sexually Transmitted Infections or Diseases (STIs or STDs)



Main Sexually transmitted Infections:

- Gonorrhea
- Syphilis
- Lymphogranuloma Venereum (LGV)
- Genital Herpes
- Genital Warts -Human Papilloma virus
- HIV & AIDS
- Hepatitis B
- Hepatitis C
- Trichomoniasis

Why Is This Important About STIs?

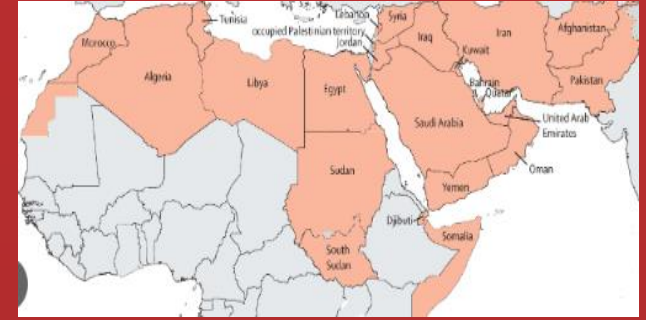


STDs

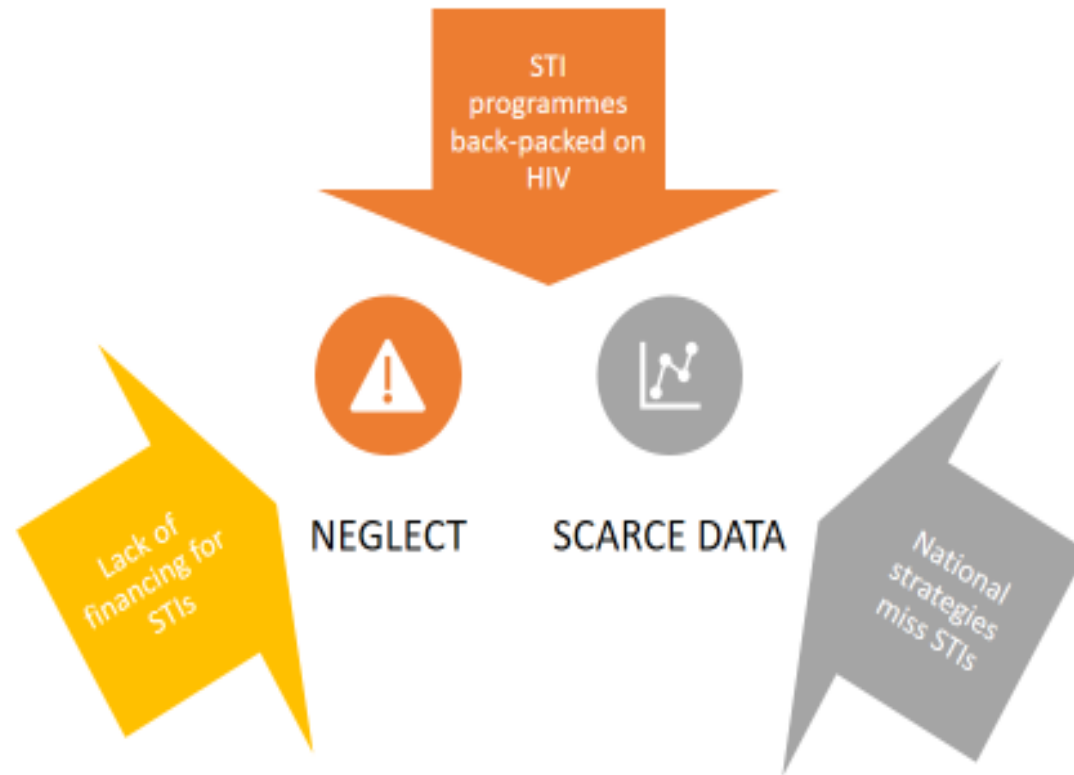
CAN AFFECT ANYONE



STIs in Eastern Mediterranean Region



STI in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

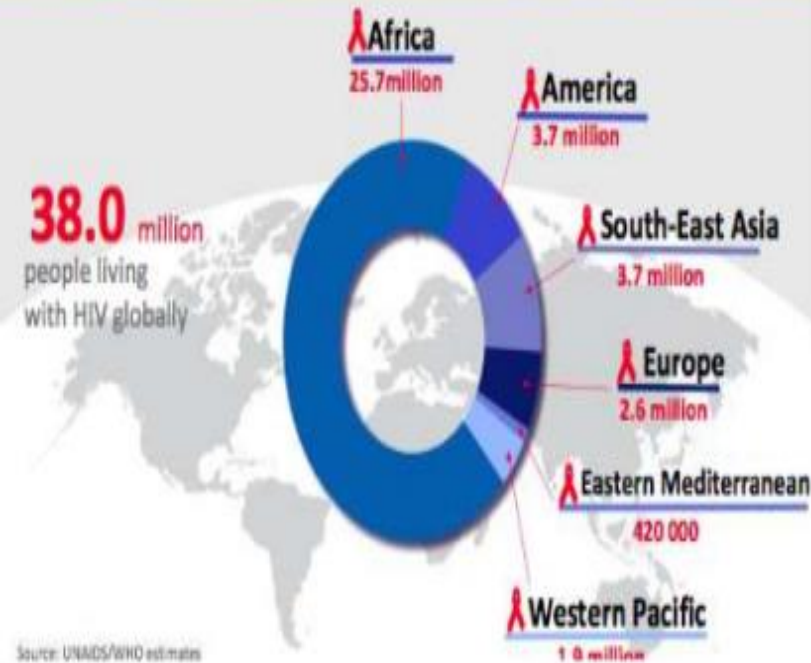


Summary of regional (EMR) HIV epidemic

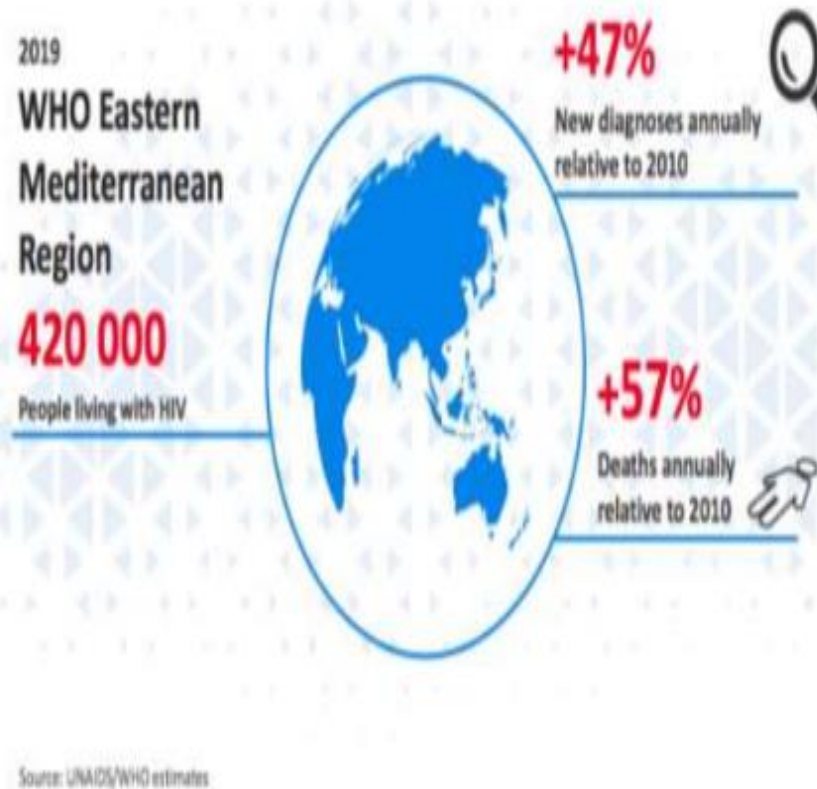
HIV prevalence in the EMR is lowest in the world

Comparison with other Regions

People living with HIV by WHO region, 2019



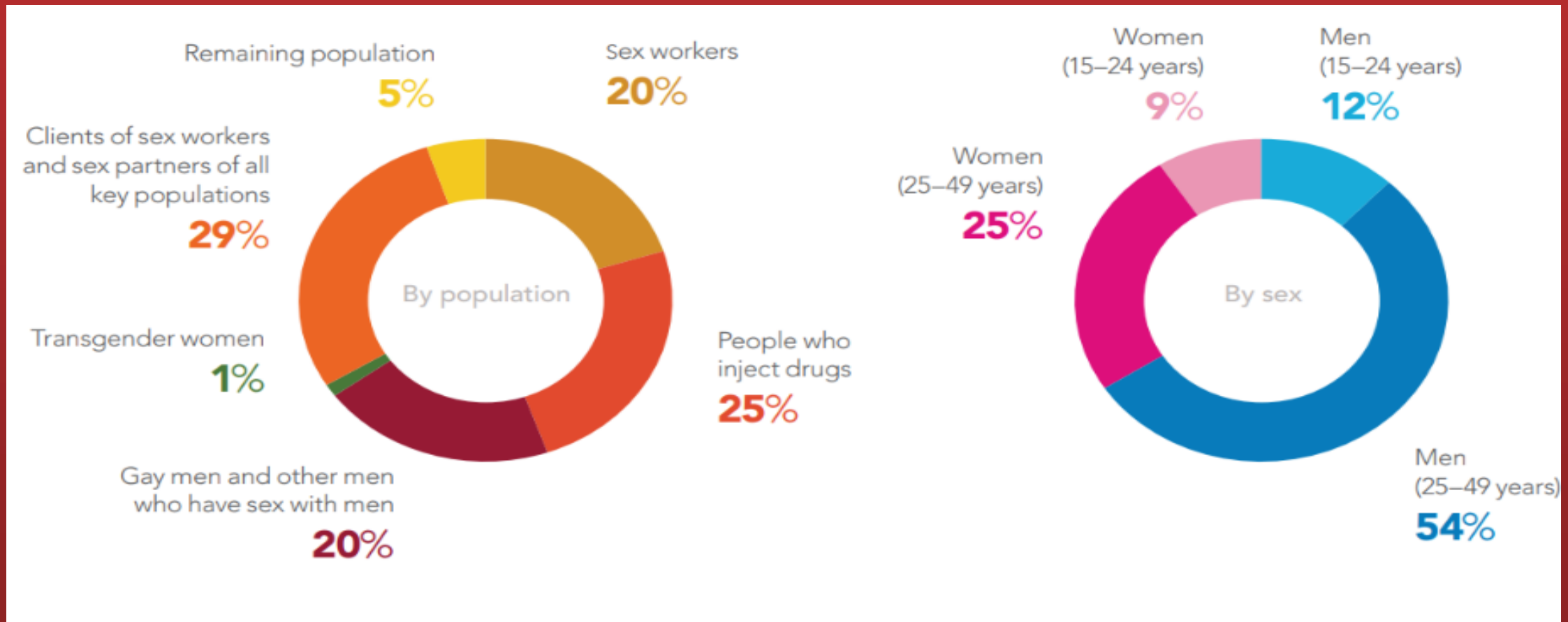
Overview of HIV in EMR



An estimated 1.1% (420,000) of adults aged 15–49 years are living with HIV in the EMR, according to 2019 estimates

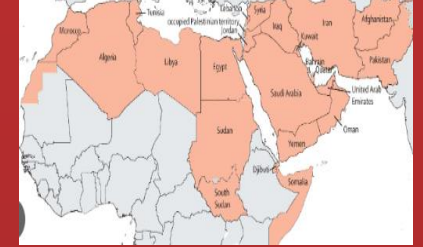
Despite having the lowest HIV prevalence in the world, the EMR region is one of few regions where the *HIV epidemic has not waned and continues to increase*

DISTRIBUTION OF NEW HIV INFECTIONS BY POPULATION GROUP AND SEX (AGED 15–49 YEARS), MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA (MENA), 2020



Source: WHO, UNIADS estimation , 2022

Summary of Eastern Mediterranean Region HIV epidemic

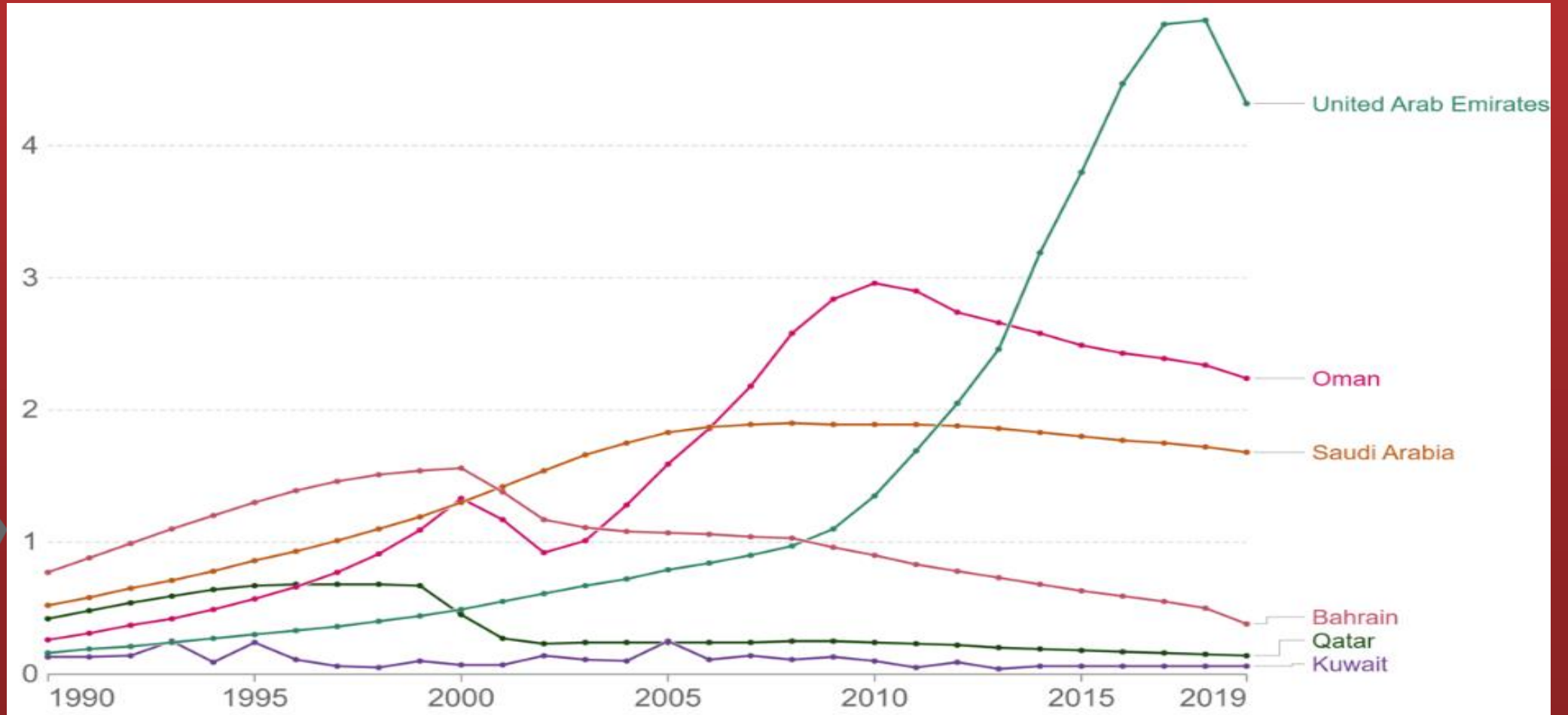


The general population living with HIV (PLHIV) is low, key populations in the Region continue to be disproportionately affected

- High rates of infection are found among people who ***inject drugs*** in Pakistan (21%), Islamic Republic of Iran (9.3%), Morocco (7.9%), Afghanistan (4.4%), Tunisia (3.9%), and Egypt (2.4%).
- HIV prevalence among ***men who have sex with men (MSM)*** was estimated at 12.6% in Lebanon followed by Morocco (5.7%), Sudan (1.4%), and Tunis (1.4%).
- HIV prevalence among ***sex workers*** was estimated to be 12.9% in Djibouti, followed by Somalia (5.2%), Egypt (2.8%), and Pakistan (3.8%).

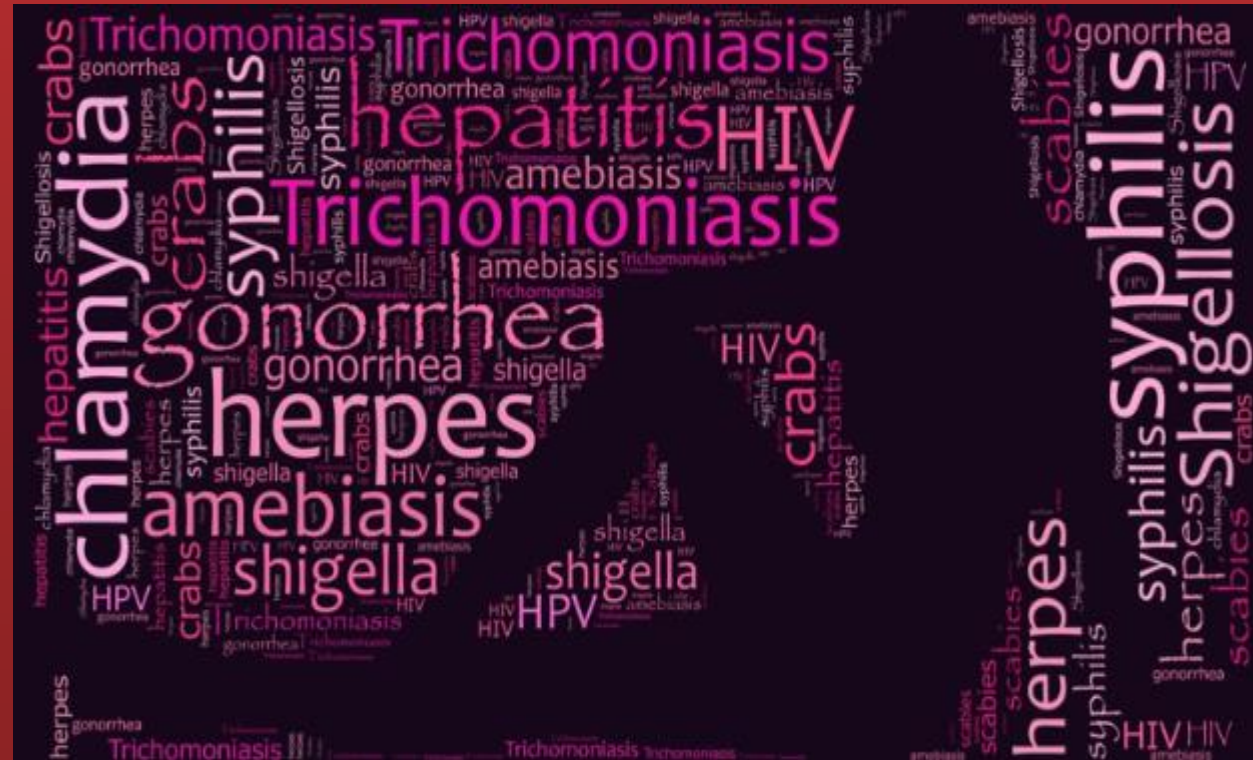
2021, estimated 45,015 PLHIV were residing in the GCC countries with prevalence levels below 0.01%

HIV/AIDS Death rate per 100,000

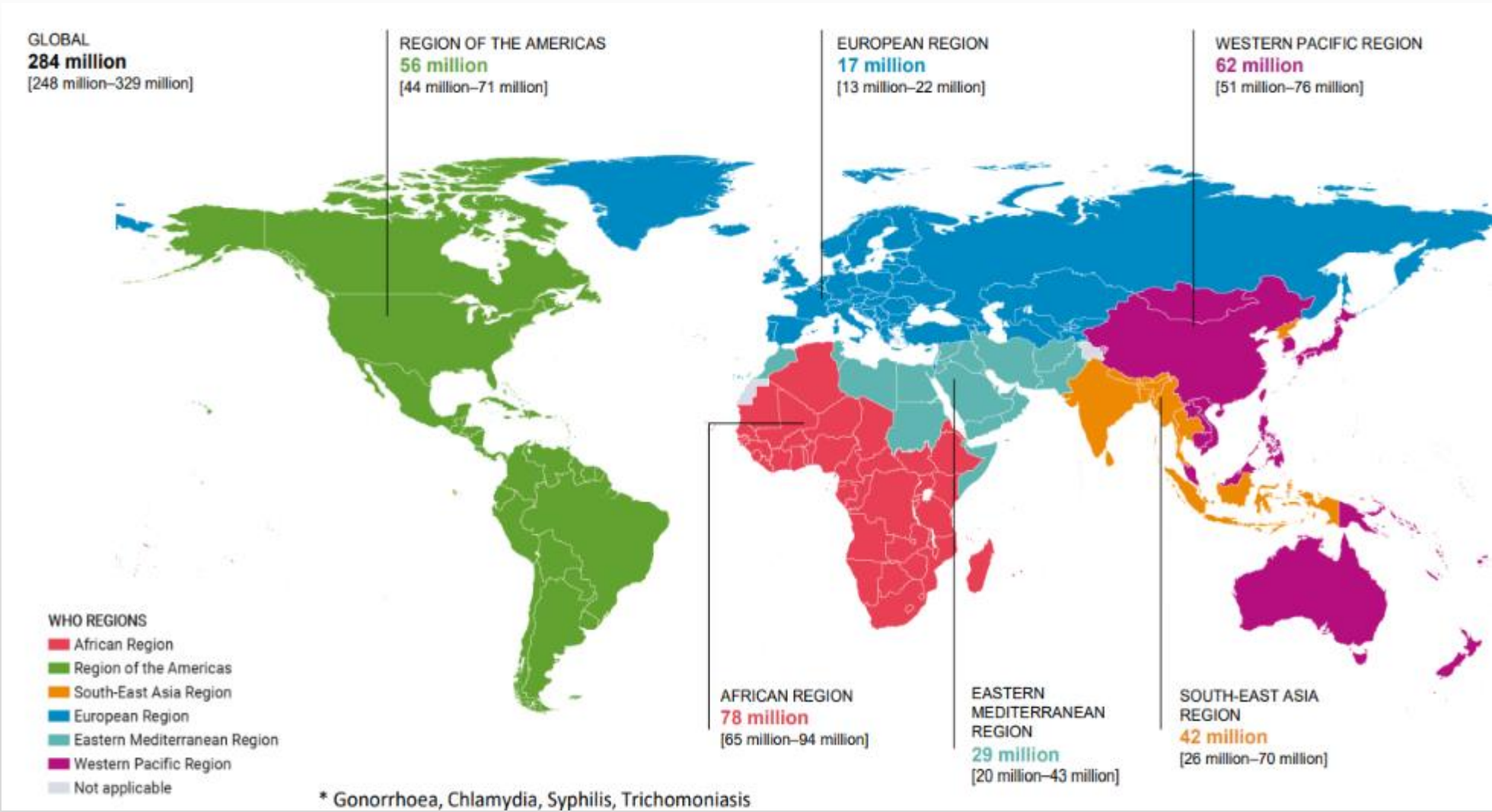


Curable STIs.....

Syphilis, gonorrhoea, chlamydia, and trichomoniasis



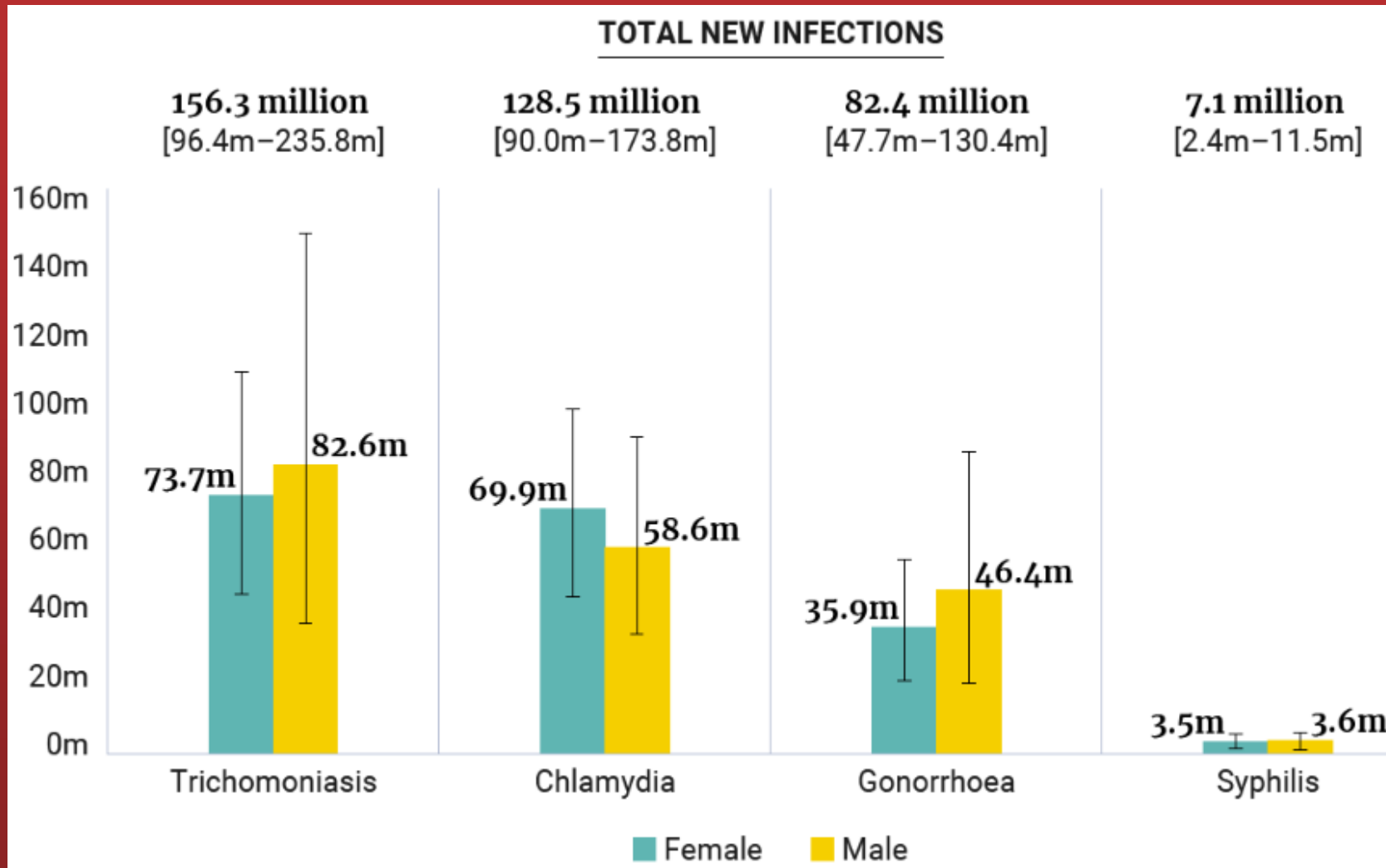
Incident cases of four curable STIs* among adults (15–49 years old), by WHO region, 2020



Source: WHO, 2021



Global burden new cases of four curable STIs among adults (15–49 years old) per year, by sex, global, 2020



1m
new STI infections
each day

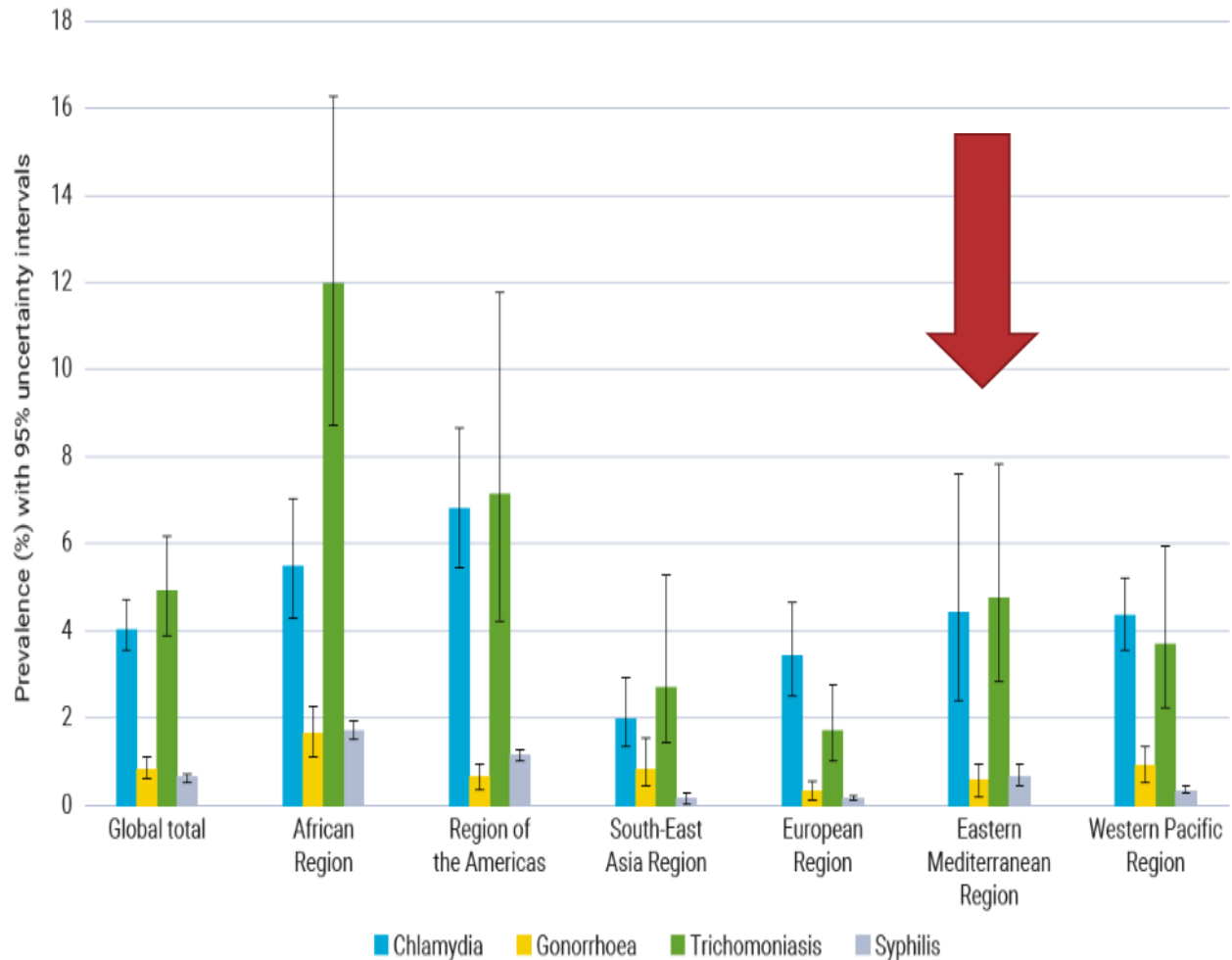
Sources: HIV: UNAIDS/WHO, 2020. Hepatitis: WHO, 2021.



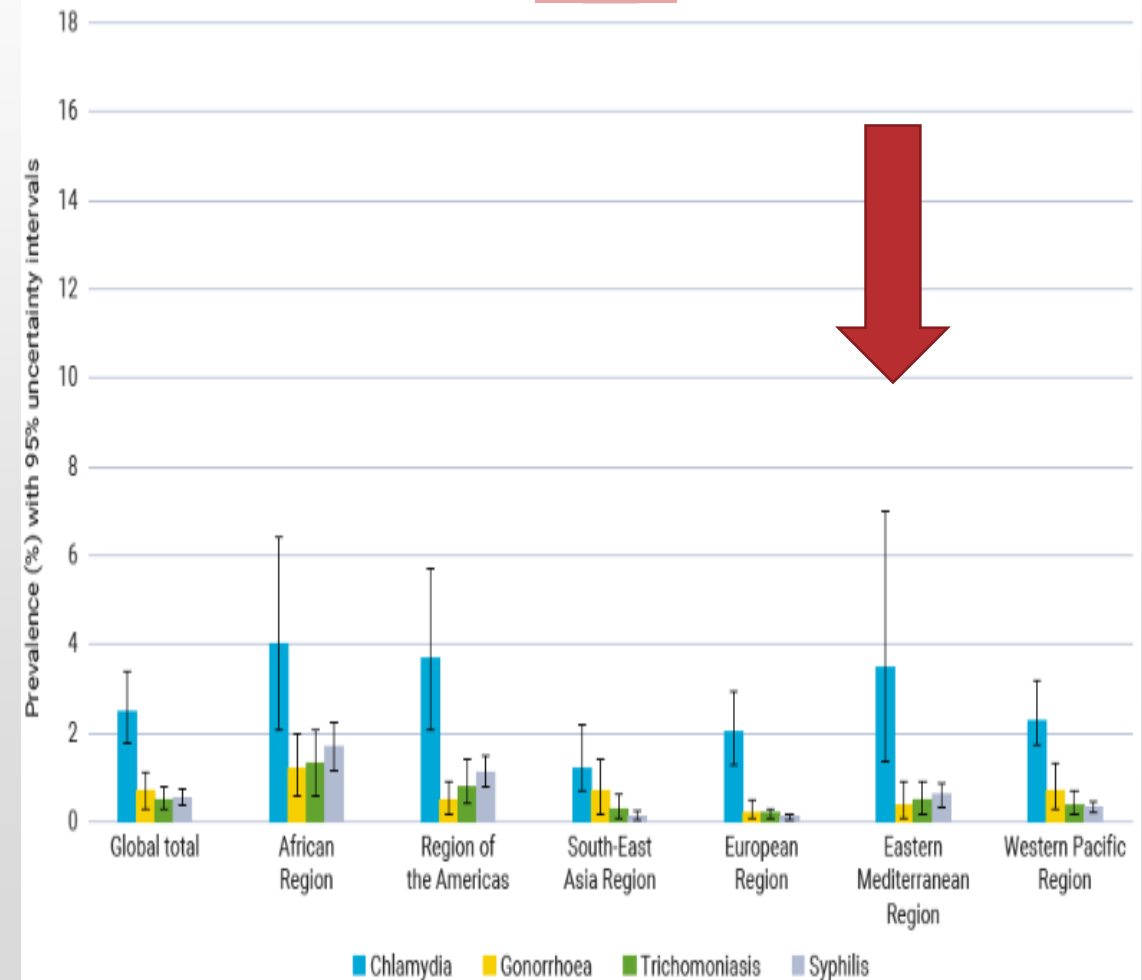
Prevalence of sexually transmitted infections among adults (15–49 years old), by sex, by WHO region, 2020



Female



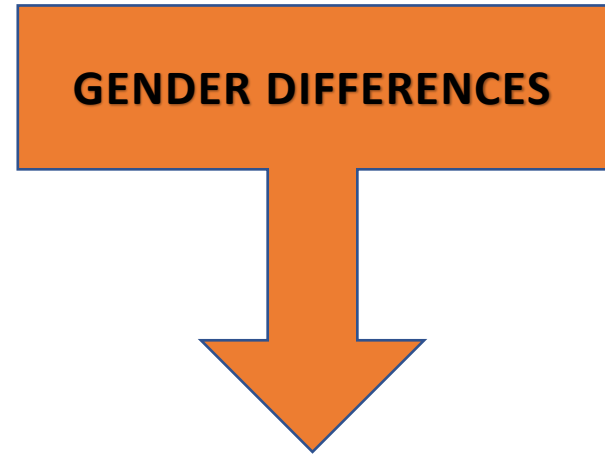
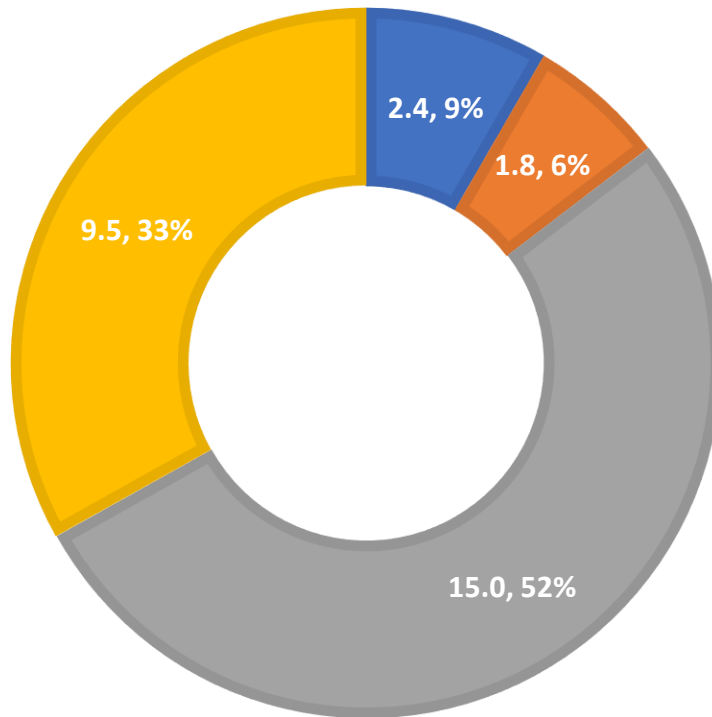
Male



Burden of STIs in the EMR

WHO ESTIMATE OF INCIDENT CASES 2020, IN MILLIONS,%

■ Syphilis ■ Gonorrhoea ■ Chlamydia ■ Trichomoniasis



	Female	Male
Chlamydia	8 million	7 million
Trichomonas	8.6 million	0.92 million

Prevalence pooled estimate data... EMR



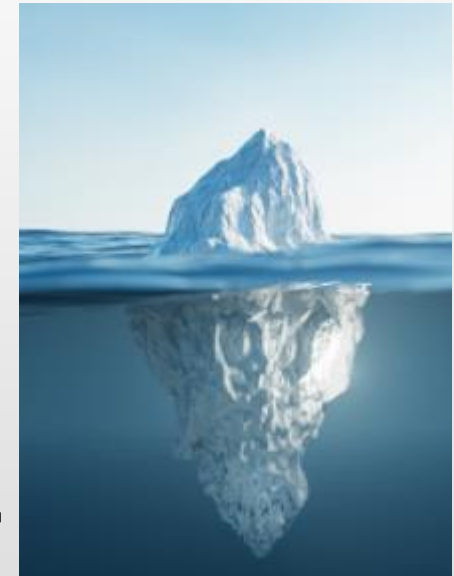
Population group	Chlamydia	Trichomoniasis	gonorrhea	Syphilis
General populations	3.0%	4.2%	0.6%	1.31%
Female sex workers	13.2%	8.3%	7.1%	---
Men who have sex with men (genital)	---	---	1.6%	---
Men who have sex with men (rectal)	7.7%	---	10.6%	---
Infertility clinic attendees	11.3%	3.5%	6.3%	---
Women with miscarriage or ectopic pregnancy	12.4%		3.8%	---



GCC Countries STIs Burden



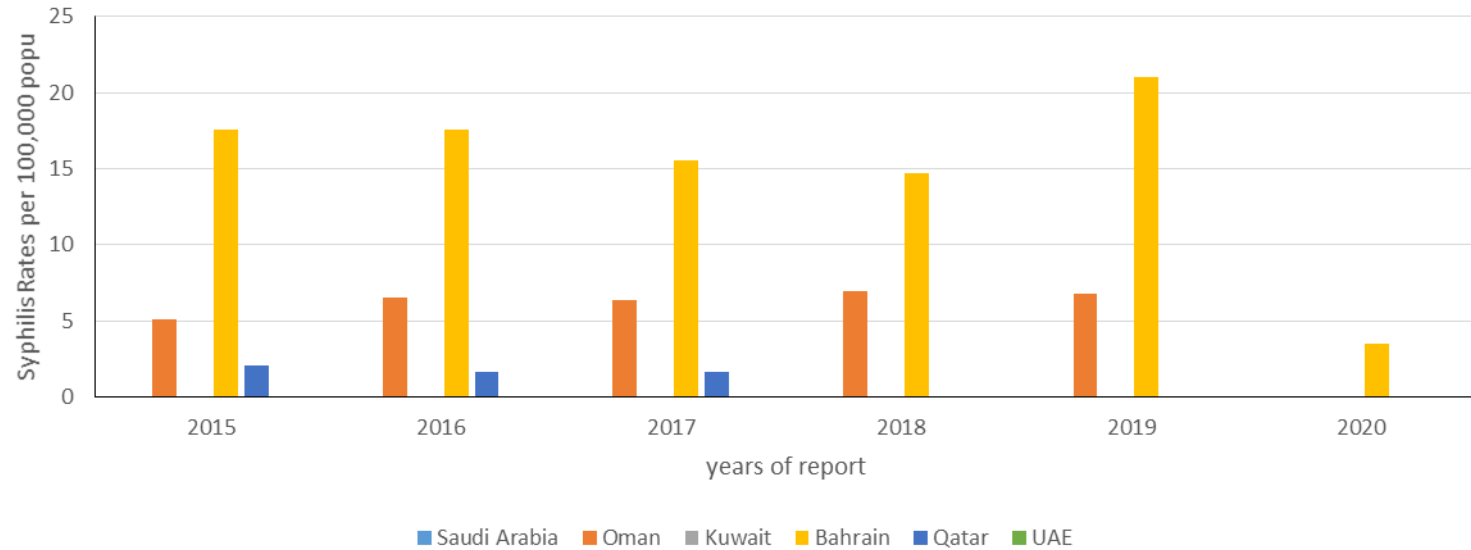
- **Programming for STIs remains largely *neglected* with only a handful of countries having programmes that respond to STIs.... No data or research**



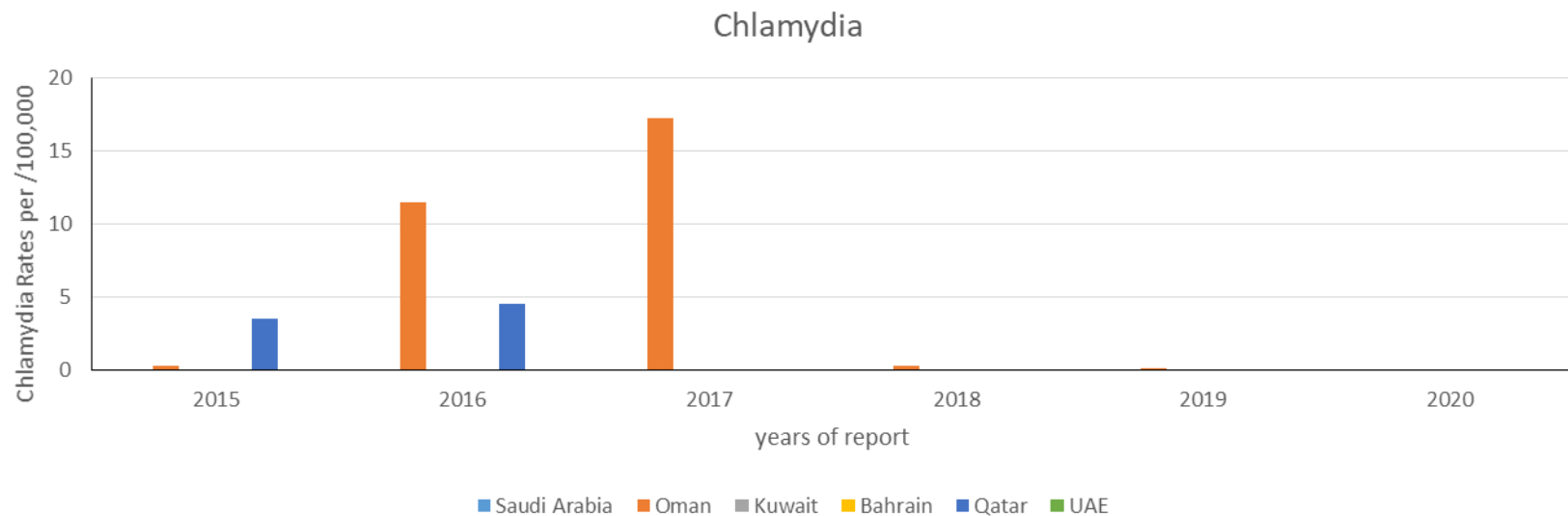
- **The STIs response in the GCC Countries is predominantly**
- **focused on patient care, with limited higher-level programming.**



GCC Country STIs Burden



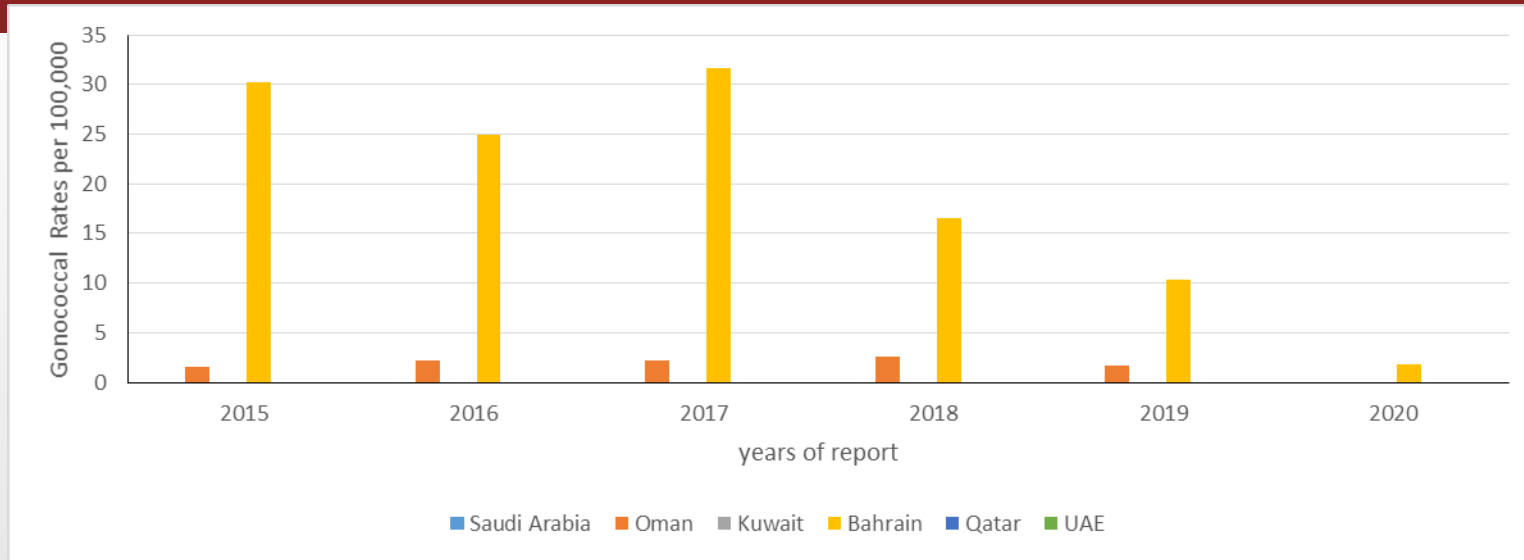
Syphilis



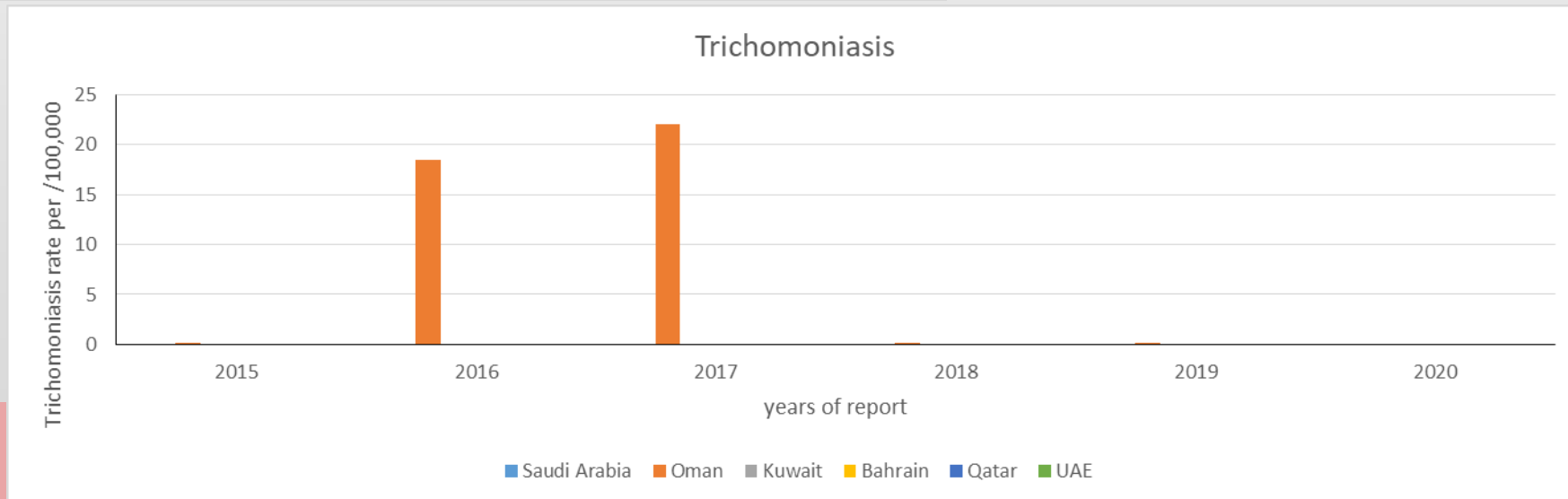
Chlamydia



GCC Country STIs Burden



Gonococcal



Trichomoniasis



Progress of GCC countries towards achieving the 95-95-95 WHO/UNAIDS targets. Control the national HIV epidemics towards elimination by 2030



In 2014, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and partners launched the 95-95-95 targets that aimed:

- **95% of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV) to be aware of their status,**
- **95% of those who are aware of their HIV status to be receiving anti-retroviral treatment (ART), and**
- **95% of those receiving ART to be virally suppressed by 2020**

- **Aware of their status (2019)**

Oman: 69% and UAE, 45%

- **Receiving anti-retroviral treatment (ART) (2020)**

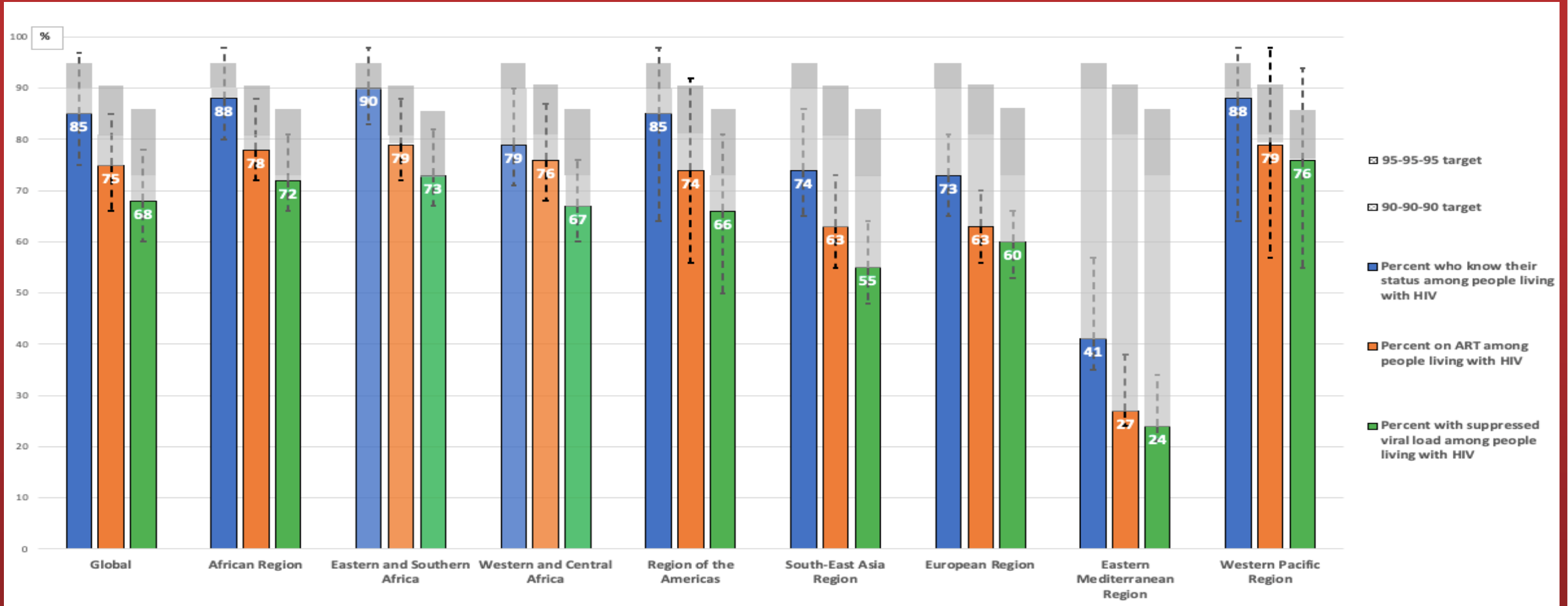
98.1%, 91%, and 91% of PLHIV in the UAE, Kuwait, and Oman, respectively.

- **Achieved greater than 95% of the viral suppression among those who were on ART.**

UAE, Kuwait, Oman, and SA



Progress towards 95-95-95 targets of the HIV service cascade, by WHO region, 2021



The region suffers from poor access to antiretroviral treatment (ART), with only 40% of those needing ART having access – compared to the global level of 73% by 2020

Source: WHO/UNIADS ESTIMATES, 2022



GCC Countries situation: Awareness, knowledge & misperceptions

Research.....

- **A survey of people aged 18-25 years in Saudi Arabia in 2008 showed: ²**
 - 56% of women were completely unaware of their sexual health.
 - Only 60% knew that condoms do not provide 100% protection from all STIs.
- **A study in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) involving university and college students showed: ^{4, 5}**
 - Almost 70% believed that they are more likely to be infected when they are menstruating, sharing toilets, using swimming pools as well as physical contact such as hand shaking or hugging (UAE).
- Negative beliefs and attitudes towards people with STIs and about the provision of SRH education & services are prevalent in the region.
- **Saudi Arabia study (2008) ²**
 - Although, 90% believed that their partners had the right to know if they had an STI, 55% said they would ask for a divorce if their partner had an STIs.

GUIDANCE



GLOBAL GUIDANCE ON
CRITERIA AND PROCESSES FOR VALIDATION:

ELIMINATION OF MOTHER-TO-CHILD TRANSMISSION OF HIV, SYPHILIS AND HEPATITIS B VIRUS

2021

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

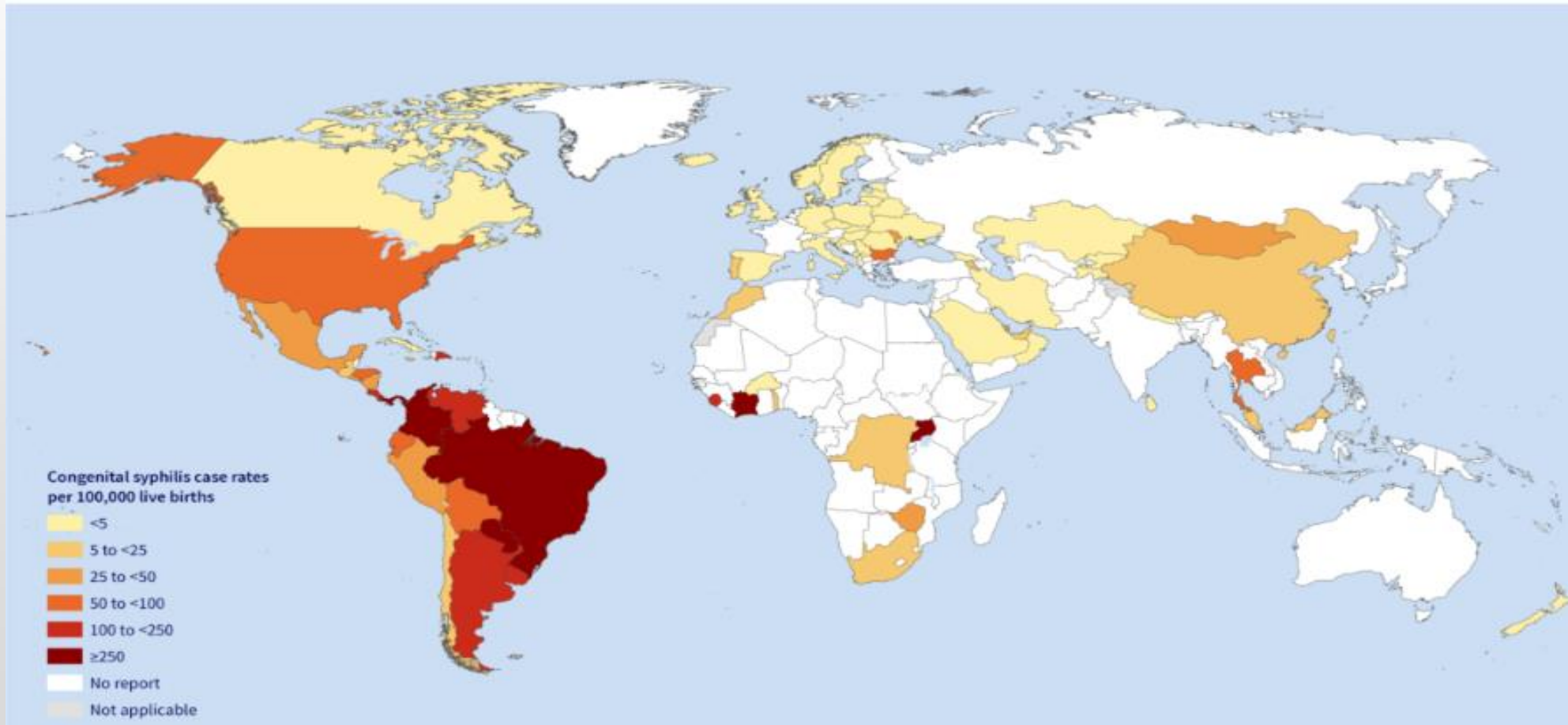


29th Sept , 2022

Oman received a certification of validation of the elimination of mother-to-child transmission (EMTCT) of *HIV and syphilis*

The congenital syphilis rate was below 2 per 100,000 live births which is less than the WHO EMTCT elimination target of ≤ 50 cases per 100,000 live births.

Congenital syphilis case rates per 100,000 live births, as of 30 Aug 2022



KEY TAKE AWAYS messages



STIs are preventable!

In GCC Countries.....STIs continue to be major sources of morbidity



▪ Reducing STIs incidence through:

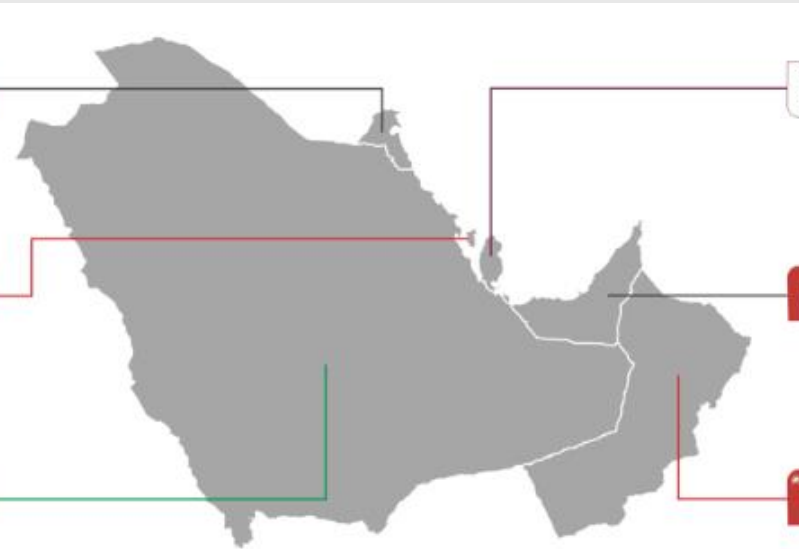
- Advocate for **STIs policies**
- **STIs and HIV services** provide gateways to frequent testing, diagnoses, and treatment, leading to improved sexual health.
- **Strengthen data systems**
- **Community engagement** is key to counter the increase in STI associated with biomedical interventions, and should address concomitant syndemic issues (e.g. **behavioral health**)

KEY TAKE AWAYS messages



The ambition of the next decade to eliminate HIV and STIs in GCC Countries as public health threats by 2030 is enormous yet feasible.

Eliminating HIV, and STIs as public health threats will require collective efforts towards universal health coverage



Data
Research





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Shukran

