



TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

GOAL 6

COMBAT TB, HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES

HIV/AIDS CONTROL PROGRAMME



TARGET: Halt and begin to reverse, by 2015, the spread of HIV/AIDS.

OBJECTIVE: Increase awareness and knowledge about HIV/AIDS as the first step in preventing its transmission.

SITUATION IN IRAQ

GENERALLY IRAQ IS CONSIDERED AS ONE OF THE COUNTRIES WITH LOW LEVEL EPIDEMIC AFFECTING MOST AT RISK POPULATION GROUPS.

- The story of AIDS in Iraq started in 1986 when hemophilic children were treated with contaminated blood products.
- During 1987, all registered cases of hemophilia in the country were examined.
- **585** cumulative number of Iraqis & non Iraqis registered from 1986 – 2010 (25 years)
- **288** were Iraqis (83% males & 17% females)
- The mode of transmission of HIV in Iraq (based on case reports of 585 cases):

71% by contaminated blood

18% by sexual transmission

4% from infected mother to children

7% unknown

CHALLENGES AND GAPS

HOWEVER, LITTLE IS KNOWN ABOUT THE HIV SITUATION IN IRAQ OWING TO LACK OF STUDIES AMONG MOST AT RISK POPULATION GROUPS.

- The National AIDS Strategic Framework (2005 – 2007) needs revision to address current challenges.
- Like most countries in the Middle East, there is only limited information on various aspects of HIV (magnitude, risk behaviors and most at risk populations).
- The limited information available indicate:
 - Limited knowledge on ways of transmission and mode of prevention.
 - High level of stigma towards and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

WHO provides technical assistance and leads a multi-agency HIV/AIDS policy support and capacity building project that aims at:

- Support development of national AIDS strategic plan, operational plan, M&E framework and tools
- Generation of strategic information on HIV among most at risk population groups and establishing strengthening national HIV surveillance system
- Capacity development and training of national staff

ACHIEVEMENTS/RESPONSE

- Structured response to HIV/AIDS has been established in Iraq since 1987 with formulation of the National AIDS Control Program.
- Health education has been one of the major strategic interventions of the national response focusing on:
 1. Provision of basic prevention information through various mass media outlets
 2. Encouraging HIV counseling and testing
- HIV testing is conducted for various groups:
 1. Blood donors (100%)
 2. Patients who are clinically suspected of being infected with HIV, patients with sexually transmitted infections
 3. Patients receiving frequent blood transfusion
 4. Patient with tuberculosis
 5. Pregnant women who are at risk of HIV infection
 6. Couples planning to get married
 7. Newborns of HIV infected mothers and contacts of HIV positive cases
 8. Prisoners with sexual offences
 9. Travelers to Iraq, health workers, long distance drivers, migrants
- The national program provides medical and social care for people living with HIV through 15 counseling centers all over the country with:
 1. Financial support
 2. Free medical treatment
 3. Periodic medical assessment
 4. Provision of condoms
 5. Provision of place to live
 6. Coordination in supporting orphans of AIDS

TOWARDS ACHIEVING MDG 6

INCREASING AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE ABOUT HIV/AIDS IS THE FIRST STEP IN PREVENTING ITS TRANSMISSION AND SPREAD.

HIV/AIDS AND DRUG RESISTANCE:

The ability of HIV to mutate and reproduce itself in the presence of antiretroviral drugs is called HIV drug resistance. The consequences of drug resistance include treatment failure, increased direct and indirect health costs associated with the need to start more costly second-line treatment for patients, the spread of resistant strains of HIV and the need to develop new anti-HIV drugs.

WORLD HEALTH DAY 2011



WHO has selected combating antimicrobial resistance as the theme for World Health Day 2011. On this day, WHO issues an international call for concerted action to halt the spread of antimicrobial resistance and recommends a six-point policy package for governments.

WHO calls on all key stakeholders, including policy-makers and planners, the public and patients, practitioners and prescribers, pharmacists and dispensers, and the pharmaceutical industry, to act and take responsibility for combating antimicrobial resistance.

MUCH PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE. *The Government of Iraq and development partners can take pride in these achievements. However, more efforts and investment are necessary to make further progress by 2015 to achieve all the health-related MDGs.*