

Country Disease Outlook

Gambia

August 2023



World Health
Organization

African Region

Background

The Islamic Republic of the Gambia is a country in west Africa, surrounded by the neighbouring country of Senegal. It is a low-income country with a GDP per capita of US\$ 840 (2022) and a population of 2.7 million (2022). With 176 people per square kilometre, it is one of the most densely populated countries in Africa.

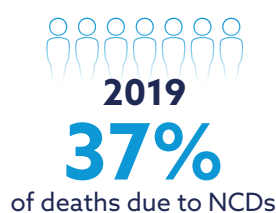
Key points

- ◆ Gambia has a high burden of communicable and non-communicable disease (NCDs), with the latter making up 37% of deaths in 2019.
- ◆ Gambia improved its child survival rates between 2015 and 2021, however it is not yet meeting the SDG targets for neonatal or under-five mortality rates.
- ◆ Gambia is endemic for two of the five NTDs amenable to preventive chemotherapy through mass drug administration (MDA). In 2020, 80% of the 17.7 million people targeted (80%) were treated with MDA.
- ◆ Gambia's vaccination coverage rates have fallen below the 90% target for vaccination in children in recent years, reaching 82% with both the third dose of DTP-containing vaccine and 79% with the first dose of measles-containing vaccine in 2021. It is important for Gambia to sustainably increase its vaccination coverage through routine immunization while also considering how to implement catch-up vaccination strategies in the country to ensure that no children are left unprotected from vaccine-preventable diseases into the future.

UHC/CN

Universal Health Coverage/Communicable
and Non-communicable Diseases
WHO Regional Office for Africa





Broad disease outlook

The country has a high burden of both communicable (such as malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS) and non-communicable disease (NCDs). The latter was estimated to have caused 37% of deaths in 2019.

Communicable diseases

Malaria

Malaria remains a public health problem in Gambia with an estimated 213,311 cases in 2021 (incidence rate of 80.8 cases per 1,000), resulting in 615 deaths. The malaria incidence rate has been below the targets set by the Global Technical Strategy for Malaria since 2015, although the incidence rate has been increasing in 2020-21 since its lowest point in 2019.

Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS

In 2021, incidence of tuberculosis for Gambia was 149 cases per 100,000 people. The mortality rate of TB cases (all forms, excluding HIV coinfection) has increased since 2015, going from 21 to 26 per 100,000 population in 2021. Similarly, the TB mortality rate among HIV-positive people has increased from 8.6 to 7.5 in the same period.

Gambia has not met the 95-95-95 goals:

- ▲ 55% of people living with HIV that know their status.
- ▲ 61% of people living with HIV who know their status are on treatment.
- ▲ There is limited data on the number of people living with HIV and on treatment who are virally suppressed.

Approximately 8,695 people were receiving antiretroviral treatment in 2021.

Neglected tropical diseases

Gambia was endemic for two of the five NTDs amenable to preventive chemotherapy through mass drug administration (MDA), namely schistosomiasis and soil-transmitted helminthiasis. In 2020, 14.1 million of the 17.7 million targeted (80%) were treated with MDA.

Other notable NTDs that remain endemic are taeniasis and cysticercosis and leprosy.

Non-communicable diseases

NCDs are a significant health problem in Gambia. The age-standardised mortality rate across four major NCDs (Cardiovascular Disease, Chronic Respiratory Disease, Cancer and Diabetes) was high at 653 per 100,000 in males and 561 in females in 2021.

Gambia has implemented initial efforts on NCD policy and plan, tobacco taxes, tobacco smoke free/pollution, tobacco health warnings, tobacco advertising bans, however there is very limited progress against the remaining indicators. These include those relating to NCD guidelines, alcohol advertising restrictions, salt policies, trans fats policies, marketing to children and physical activity awareness.

Childhood Immunization

Gambia's coverage rates of vaccination in children had historically been meeting the 90% target levels, although the rates have fallen in recent years. In 2021, coverage for the third dose of DTP-containing vaccine was 82%, while the coverage rate for the first dose of measles vaccine was 79%. This resulted in an estimated 15,391 under-immunised children and 15,391 zero-dose children. It is important for Gambia to sustainably increase its vaccination coverage through routine immunization while also considering how to implement catch-up vaccination strategies in the country to ensure that no children are left unprotected from vaccine-preventable diseases into the future.

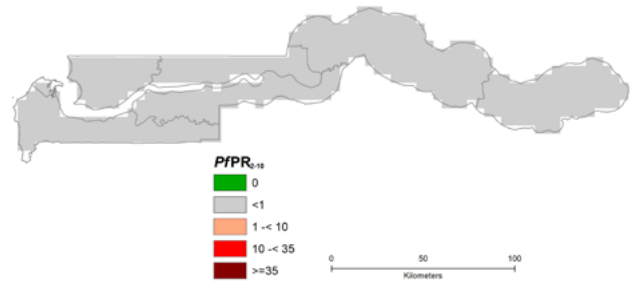
Child survival

Based on the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME) estimates, the under-5 mortality rate has fallen from 60 to 48 per 1,000 live births between 2015 and 2021, although it is still well above the SDG target of 25 per 1,000 live births. Similarly, the neonatal mortality rate decreased from 30 to 25 per 1,000 live births in the same period, remaining above the SDG target of 12.

MALARIA

POPULATION AT RISK IN 2022	TOTAL MALARIA CASES IN 2021	TOTAL MALARIA DEATHS IN 2021
2.6 million people	213,311 million	615

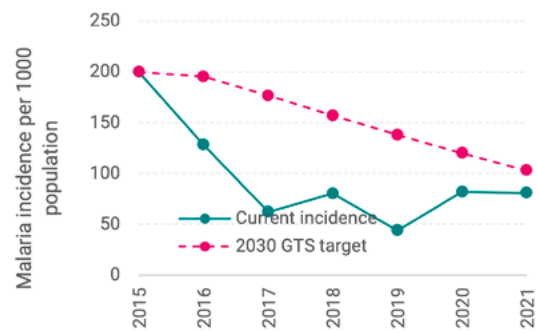
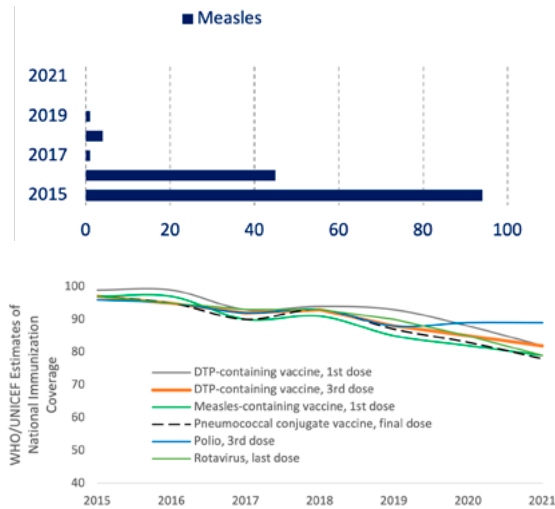
ITN use in children under five years 44.0% and 5.2% use of ACTs among those with fever for whom care was sought and received a finger or heel prick



Plasmodium falciparum malaria prevalence in children in Gambia in 2020. Estimates from the Malaria Atlas project

Malaria incidence in Gambia since 2015 compared to GTS targets shows that the country is on track to achieving GTS targets although cases of malaria increased in recent years.

EXPANDED PROGRAMME ON IMMUNIZATION IN CHILDREN



Zero dose children 15,391

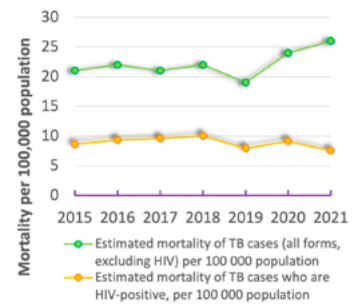
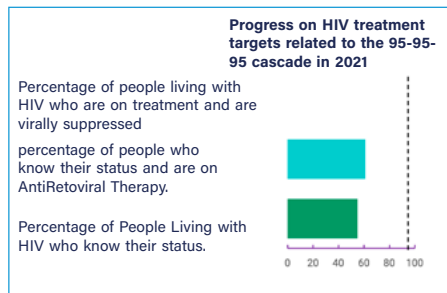
Under-immunized 15,391

Although there has been no outbreak of measles in the last 2 years, trends on WUENIC estimates show that vaccination coverage has been declining since 2015.

HIV AND TUBERCULOSIS

- 8,695** people receiving antiretroviral therapy in 2021
- 71%** Treatment success rate for HIV-positive TB cases
- 18%** of children (aged < 5 years) household contacts of bacteriologically-confirmed TB cases on preventive treatment

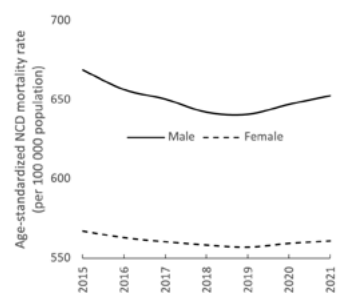
0% Domestic funding for TB
Unknown Domestic funding for HIV



- Indicator 1 - Targets
- Indicator 2 - CRV Mortality
- Indicator 3 - Surveys
- Indicator 4 - NCD policy and Plan
- Indicator 5A - Tobacco taxes
- Indicator 5B - Tobacco smoke free/polution
- Indicator 5C - Tobacco health warning
- Indicator 5D - Tobacco advertising ban
- Indicator 5E - Tobacco media campaign
- Indicator 6A - Alcohol availability
- Indicator 6B - Alcohol advertising restrictions
- Indicator 6C - Alcohol taxes
- Indicator 7A - Salt policies
- Indicator 7B - Trans fats policies
- Indicator 7C - Marketing to children
- Indicator 8 - Physical activity awareness
- Indicator 9 - NCD guidelines

NCD PROGRESS - Targets INDICATORS

- Achieved**
- Partially achieved**
- Not achieved/Unknown**



NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASES

Endemic NTDS requiring Preventive Chemotherapy (PC)

- Soil-transmitted helminthiasis
- Schistosomiasis

PC-NTDs treatment in 2021
17.7 Million targeted for MDA
14.1 Million treated with MDA

OTHER MAJOR NTDS

- Taeniasis and cysticercosis
- Leprosy

