

# Country Disease Outlook

## Mauritania

August 2023



World Health  
Organization

African Region

### Background

The Islamic Republic of Mauritania is a country in northwest Africa, bounded by Algeria, Mauritania, Senegal, Western Sahara, and the Atlantic Ocean. It is a lower middle-income country with a GDP per capita of US\$ 2,191 (2022) and a population of 4.7 million (2022).

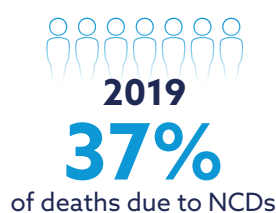
### Key points

- ◆ Mauritania has a high burden of communicable and non-communicable disease (NCDs), with the latter making up 37% of deaths in 2019.
- ◆ Mauritania 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.
- ◆ Mauritania is endemic for two of the five NTDs amenable to preventive chemotherapy through mass drug administration (MDA). In 2020, 141,370 of the 163,158 targeted (87%) were treated with MDA.
- ◆ Mauritania's coverage rates of vaccination in children have historically been below the 90% target rate. Vaccination rates dipped in 2020 and 2021 compared to previous years, with the third dose of DTP-containing vaccine reaching 77%, while the coverage rate for the first dose of measles vaccine was 75%. It is important for Mauritania to continue to strengthen its routine immunization system, while also implementing catch-up vaccination strategies in the country to ensure that no children are left unprotected from vaccine-preventable diseases in 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 Mauritania with an estimated 85,030 cases in 2021 (with an incidence rate of 18 cases per 1000 people), resulting in 1,144 deaths. The country is on track to meet the targets set by the Global Technical Strategy for Malaria as the malaria incidence rate has decreased since 2015 and was below the target in 2021.

### Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS

The incidence rate of TB is 81 cases per 100,000 population. The mortality rate of TB cases (all forms, excluding HIV coinfection) has decreased from 23 to 13 per 100,000 population between 2015 and 2021. The TB mortality rate among HIV-positive people has remained low and has decreased from 2 to 1 in the same period.

Mauritania has not met any of the 95-95-95 goals:

- ▲ 40% of people living with HIV know their status
- ▲ 38% of the people living with HIV that know their status are on treatment.
- ▲ 25% of people living with HIV and on treatment are virally suppressed.

Approximately 3,631 people were receiving antiretroviral treatment in 2021.

### Neglected tropical diseases

Mauritania is endemic for two of the five NTDs amenable to preventive chemotherapy through mass drug administration (MDA), namely schistosomiasis, and soil-transmitted helminths. In 2020, 141,370 of the 163,158 targeted (87%) were treated with MDA.

Other notable NTDs that remain endemic are leishmaniasis (cutaneous and visceral), taeniasis and cysticercosis, mycetoma, leprosy, and rabies.

## Non-communicable diseases

NCDs are a significant health problem in Mauritania. The age-standardised mortality rate across four major NCDs (Cardiovascular Disease, Chronic Respiratory Disease, Cancer and Diabetes) was 443 per 100,000 in males and 507 in females in 2021.

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

## Childhood Immunization

Mauritania's coverage rates of vaccination in children have historically been below the 90% target rate. Vaccination rates dipped in 2020 and 2021 compared to previous years, with the third dose of DTP-containing vaccine reaching 77%, while the coverage rate for the first dose of measles vaccine was 75%. This resulted in 19,535 zero-dose children and 35,102 under-immunized children. It is important for Mauritania to continue to strengthen its routine immunization system, while also implementing catch-up vaccination strategies in the country to ensure that no children are left unprotected from vaccine-preventable diseases in the future.

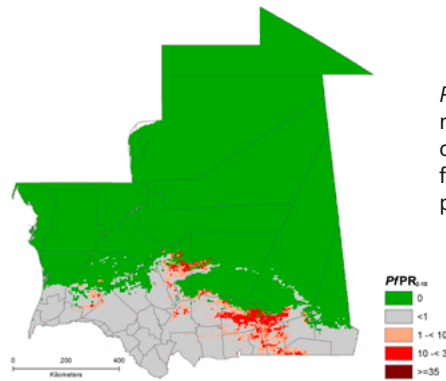
## Child survival

Based on the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME) estimates, the under-5 mortality rate has fallen from 49 to 41 per 1,000 live births between 2015 and 2021, although it is still above the SDG target of 25 per 1,000 live births. Similarly, the neonatal mortality rate decreased from 26 to 23 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
<b>4.6 million</b>	<b>85,030</b>	<b>1,144</b>

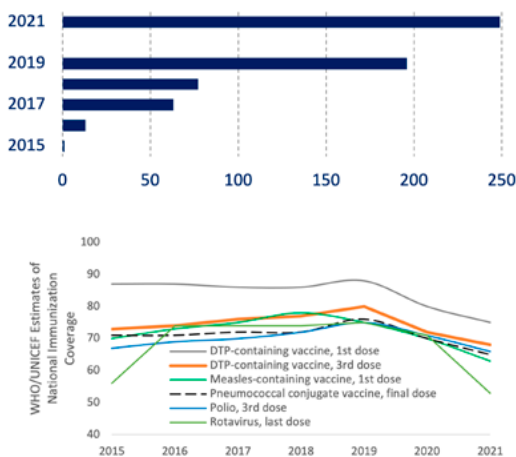
ITN use in children under five years 11.9% and 9.3% use of ACTs among those with fever for whom care was sought and received a finger or heel prick



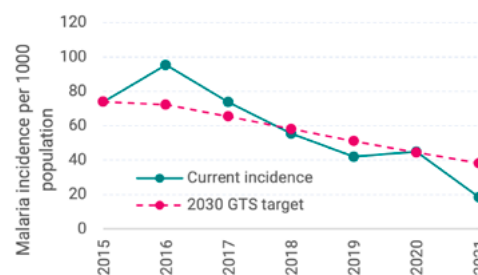
*Plasmodium falciparum* malaria prevalence in children in 2020. Estimates from the Malaria Atlas project

**EXPANDED PROGRAMME ON IMMUNIZATION IN CHILDREN**

■ Measles



Malaria incidence in Mauritania since 2015 compared to GTS targets shows that the country is on track to achieving GTS targets despite a slight increase in 2020.



**Zero dose children 36,891**

**Under-immunized 47,220**

WUENIC estimates show that, for most basic antigens, coverage declined in 2019 and has not recovered.

Measles outbreaks occurred in 2021 and continue to be a major public health problem in Mauritania.

**HIV AND TUBERCULOSIS**

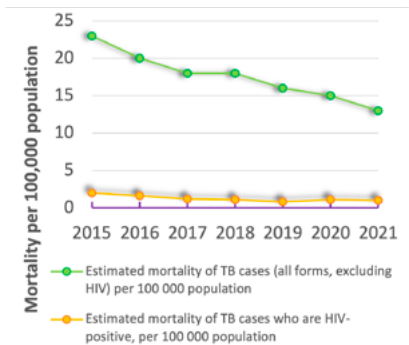
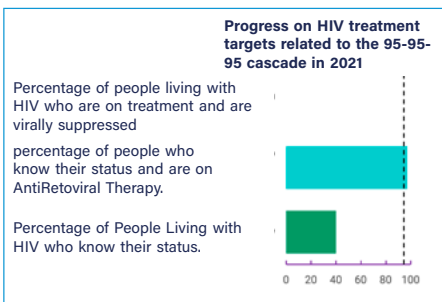
**56,194** people receiving antiretroviral therapy in 2021

**61%** Treatment success rate for HIV-positive TB cases

**Unknown** of children (aged < 5 years) household contacts of bacteriologically-confirmed TB cases on preventive treatment

**<10%** Domestic funding for TB

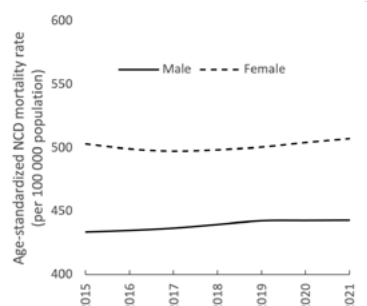
**Unknown** Domestic funding for HIV



- 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 INDICATORS**

- Achieved
- Partially achieved
- Not achieved/Unknown



**NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASES**

Endemic NTDS requiring Preventive Chemotherapy (PC)

- Schistosomiasis
- Trachoma

PC-NTDs treatment in 2021  
**163,158** targeted for MDA  
**141,370** treated with MDA

**OTHER MAJOR NTDS**

- Leishmaniasis (cutaneous and visceral)
- Taeniasis and cysticercosis
- Mycetoma
- Leprosy
- Rabies