

Country Disease Outlook

Rwanda

August 2023



World Health
Organization

African Region

Background

The Republic of Rwanda is a relatively small country in east Africa. It's landlocked and bordered by Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and Tanzania. It is a low-income with a GDP per capita of US\$ 822 (2021), with a population of 13.4 million (2021).

Key points

- ❖ Rwanda has a high burden of communicable and non-communicable disease (NCDs), with the latter making up 50% of deaths in 2019.
- ❖ Rwanda has 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.
- ❖ Rwanda is making steady progress in reducing HIV and TB mortality and is very close to achieving the 95-95-95 goals for HIV. Rwanda has also successfully reduced its malaria incidence rate since 2015 and has met the global targets for the first time in 2021.
- ❖ Rwanda is endemic for two out of the five NTDs amenable to preventive chemotherapy through mass drug administration, reaching 96% of the 5.5 million people targeted for treatment (2020).
- ❖ Rwanda's coverage rates of vaccination in children have historically been high, although these fell in 2020 and 2021. A significant challenge is to restore the vaccination coverage rates and implement catch-up strategies to reach the cohorts of under-immunised and zero-dose children.

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 50% of deaths in 2019. The epidemiological transition in the country has been incorporated into Rwanda's fourth Health Sector Strategy plan (2018-2024), which reflects the increase in population and life expectancy, as well as the anticipated increase of the health needs of older people, particularly for NCDs.

Communicable diseases

Malaria

Malaria remains a public health problem in Rwanda, with an estimated 1.7 million cases in 2021 (with an incidence rate of 134.9 cases per 1000 people), resulting in 3,258 deaths. The country has met the Global Technical Strategy for Malaria target in 2021 for the first time after the incidence rate per 1,000 population has been steadily decreasing since 2017 (from 710 to 159 per 1,000).

Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS

The burden of TB is low with an estimated incidence of 56 cases per 100,000 population. Estimates of mortality rates related to TB have slightly increased since 2015 from 5 to 7.3 per 100,000 population.

The 95-95-95 goals are very close to being fully achieved:

- ▲ 94% of people living with HIV that know their status.
- ▲ 98% of people living with HIV who know their status are on treatment.
- ▲ 98% of people living with HIV and on treatment who are virally suppressed.

Approximately 210,343 people were receiving anti-retroviral treatment in 2021.

Neglected tropical diseases

Rwanda is endemic for two out of the five NTDs amenable to preventive chemotherapy through mass drug administration (MDA), namely soil-transmitted helminthiasis and schistosomiasis. It is not endemic for lymphatic filariasis, onchocerciasis and trachoma. In 2021, there were 5.5 million people targeted for MDA, and almost all (5.3 million) were treated.

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

Non-communicable diseases

NCDs are a major health problem in Rwanda. The age-standardised mortality rate across four major NCDs (Cardiovascular Disease, Chronic Respiratory Disease, Cancer and Diabetes) was 695 per 100,000 in males and 609 in females in 2021.

Rwanda has implemented efforts on the NCD progress indicators related to NCD policy and plan, NCD guidelines, tobacco taxes, tobacco media campaign, alcohol advertising restrictions and trans-fat policies, but progress has been more limited on indicators related to tobacco (smoke free/pollution and advertising ban), alcohol taxes, salt policies, marketing to children and physical activity awareness.

Childhood Immunization

Rwanda's coverage rates of vaccination in children have historically been high, with the third dose of DTP-containing vaccine above 97% between 2006-2019. The rate dipped to 91% in 2020 and 88% in 2021. Similarly, the measles vaccination coverage for the first dose fell to 87% in 2021, the lowest since 2004.

There were an estimated 47,213 under-immunised children and 39,345 zero-dose children in 2021. It is important for Rwanda to both restore its vaccination coverage in line with previous performance and also consider how to implement catch-up vaccination strategies in the country to ensure that these children are not left unprotected from vaccine-preventable diseases into the future.

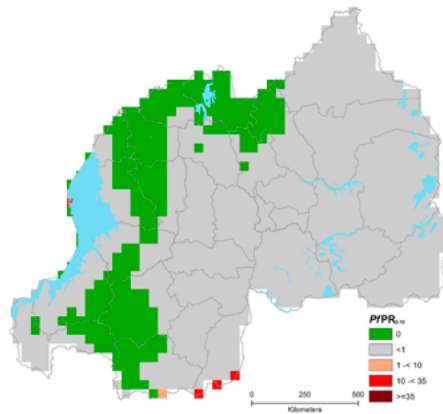
Child survival

Based on the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME) estimates, the under-5 mortality rate has fallen from 48 to 39 per 1000 live births between 2015 and 2021, it is still above the SDG target of 25 per 1,000 live births. Similarly, neonatal mortality fell from 20 to 18 per 1,000 live births in the same period, although it remains above the SDG target of 12.

MALARIA

POPULATION AT RISK IN 2022	TOTAL MALARIA CASES IN 2021	TOTAL MALARIA DEATHS IN 2021
13.5 million	1.7 million	3,258

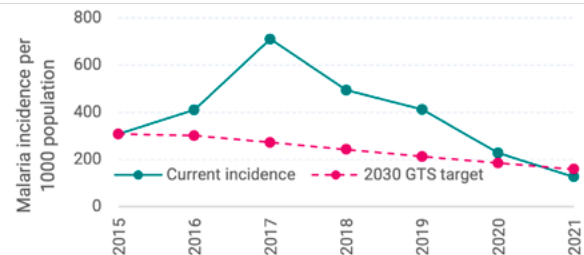
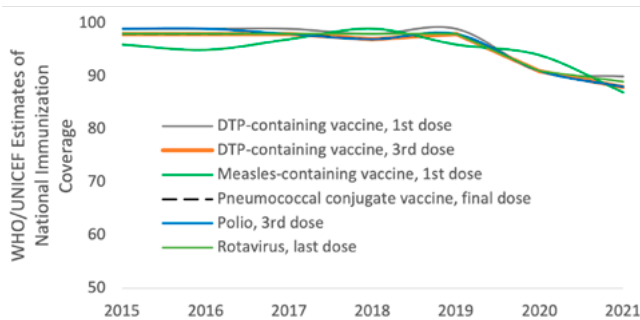
ITN use in children under five years 55.6% and 18.9% use of ACTs among those with fever for whom care was sought and received a finger or heel prick



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

Based on the GTS targets, the malaria incidence in 2021 in Rwanda indicates that it is on track to meet the global targets.

EXPANDED PROGRAMME ON IMMUNIZATION IN CHILDREN



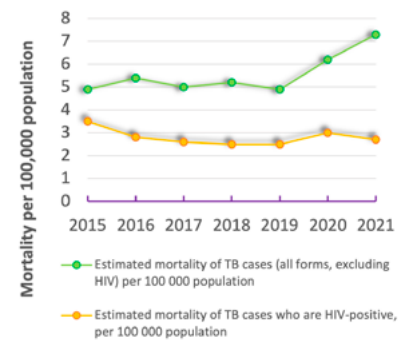
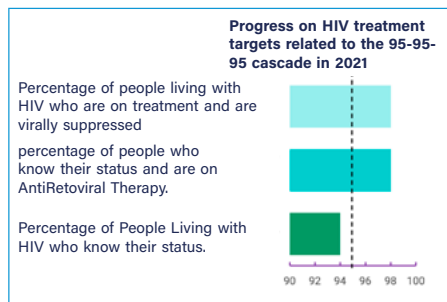
Zero dose children 39,345 **Under-immunized 47,213**

Childhood immunization dropped since 2019 highlighting a need to restore to 2018 levels.

HIV AND TUBERCULOSIS

- 210,343** people receiving antiretroviral therapy in 2021
- 80%** Treatment success rate for HIV-positive TB cases
- 51%** of children (aged < 5 years) household contacts of bacteriologically-confirmed TB cases on preventive treatment

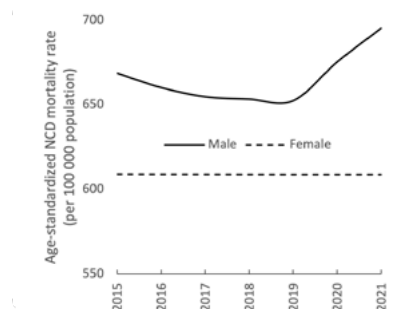
31% Domestic funding for TB
Unknown Domestic funding for HIV



- 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)

- Lymphatic filariasis (Non -endemic)
- Soil-transmitted helminthiasis
- Schistosomiasis
- Trachoma (Non -endemic)
- Onchocerciasis (non-endemic)

PC-NTDs treatment in 2021
5.5 million targeted for MDA
26.5 million treated with MDA

OTHER MAJOR NTDS

- Taeniasis and cysticercosis
- Leprosy
- Rabies
- Mycetoma