

Country Disease Outlook

South Africa

August 2023



World Health
Organization

African Region

Background

The Republic of South Africa, is the southernmost country in Africa. It is bordered by Botswana, Eswatini, Mozambique, Namibia, and Zimbabwe. It is an upper-middle income country with a GDP per capita of US \$7,055 (2021) and has a population of 59 million (2021).

Key points

- ◆ South Africa has a high burden of communicable and non-communicable disease (NCDs), with the latter making up 51% of deaths in 2019.
- ◆ South Africa had 5.5 million people receiving antiretroviral therapy in 2021 and has made progress towards achieving the 95-95-95 goals for HIV, reaching 94-79-91 in 2021. Additional efforts should
- ◆ be implemented to increase the number of people on HIV treatment once the status is known.
- ◆ South Africa has not yet met the 90% target coverage rates for vaccination in children, reaching 86% with the third dose of DTP-containing vaccine and 87% with the first dose of measles-
- ◆ containing vaccine in 2021. The country should consider implementing catch-up strategies for vaccination.
- ◆ South Africa has improved its child survival rates between 2015 and 2021 and is meeting the SDG target for neonatal mortality, but not under-five mortality rates.

UHC/CN

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





2019

51%

of deaths due to NCDs

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 51% of deaths in 2019.

Communicable diseases

Malaria

Around 10% of the population is at risk for malaria in South Africa, with an estimated 5812 cases and local cases were 2,854 in 2021 (with an incidence rate of 0.9 per 10,000 people), resulting in 56 deaths. South Africa has made good progress regarding malaria incidence rates and met the targets set as part of the Global Technical Strategy for Malaria target in 2021.

Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS

South Africa is among WHO's list of 30 high-burden tuberculosis countries and has one of the highest incidence rates of notified tuberculosis in the world. The incidence rate is 512 per 100,000 population, in 2021. The mortality rate of TB cases (all forms, excluding HIV) has increased slightly since 2015, from 36 to 38 per 100,000 population in 2021. The TB mortality rate among HIV-positive people has fallen from 80 to 55 in the same period.

Progress has been made on the 95-95-95 goals, although treatment rates are relatively low:

- ▲ 94% of people living with HIV that know their status.
- ▲ 79% of people living with HIV who know their status are on treatment.
- ▲ 91% of people living with HIV and on treatment who are virally suppressed.

Approximately 5.5 million people were receiving antiretroviral treatment in 2021.

Neglected tropical diseases

South Africa is endemic for three of the five of the NTDs amenable to preventive chemotherapy through mass drug administration (MDA), namely soil-transmitted helminthiasis, and schistosomiasis. In 2020, no one was targeted or treated with MDA.

Other notable NTDs that remain endemic are chromoblastomycosis, taeniasis and cysticercosis, leprosy and rabies. Taeniasis and cysticercosis are endemic, though the extent is not established and yet to be addressed by Department of Health (DoH).

Non-communicable diseases

NCDs are a significant health problem in South Africa. The age-standardised mortality rate across

four major NCDs (Cardiovascular Disease, Chronic Respiratory Disease, Cancer and Diabetes) was 772 per 100,000 in males and 579 in females in 2021. Multi-morbidity is a major public health challenge given the high burden of both NCDs as well as HIV and TB in South Africa. This compounds the disease burden and affects control along the continuum of care. Obesity is a major driver of morbidity and mortality with 29.2% of men and 56.6% of women being either overweight or obese.

South Africa has implemented initial efforts on the NCD progress indicators related to NCD policy and plan, NCD guidelines, tobacco taxes, alcohol taxes, however progress has been more limited on tobacco smoke free/pollution, tobacco health warnings, alcohol advertising restrictions, trans fats policies, marketing to children and physical activity guidelines.

Childhood Immunization

South Africa's coverage rates of vaccination in children have historically been fairly high, although still not reaching the 90% target coverage rates. In 2021, the third dose of DTP-containing vaccine peaked at 86% in 2021 and the measles vaccination coverage for the first dose at 87%.

South Africa has experienced sizeable outbreaks of mumps and rubella in 2020-21, alongside some measles cases.

In 2021, there were an estimated 160,896 under-immunised children and 103,433 zero-dose children. South Africa should consider the implementation of appropriate catch-up vaccination strategies to protect these populations from vaccine-preventable diseases and reduce the probability of outbreaks in the future.

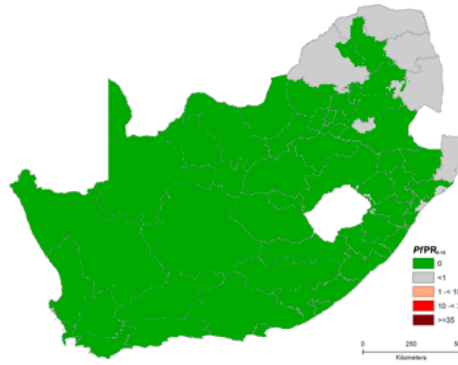
Child survival

Based on the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME) estimates, the under-5 mortality rate has fallen from 37 to 33 per 1000 live births between 2015 and 2021, remaining above the SDG target of 25 per 1,000 live births. The neonatal mortality rate remained constant at 11 per 1,000 live births in the same period, exceeding the SDG target of 12.

MALARIA

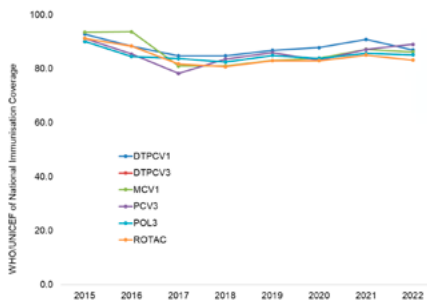
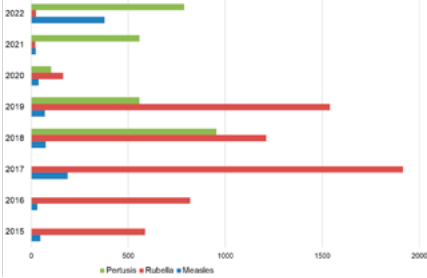
POPULATION AT RISK IN 2022	TOTAL MALARIA CASES IN 2021	TOTAL MALARIA DEATHS IN 2021
59.4 million	2,958	56

The population at risk for malaria in just few provinces 5.9 million

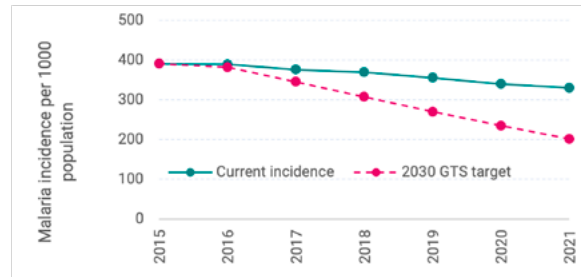


Plasmodium falciparum malaria prevalence in children in South Africa in 2020. Estimates from the Malaria Atlas project

EXPANDED PROGRAMME ON IMMUNIZATION IN CHILDREN



Malaria incidence in South Africa since 2015 compared to GTS targets shows that the country is matching GTS targets since 2019



Zero dose children 103,433 **Under-immunized 160,896**

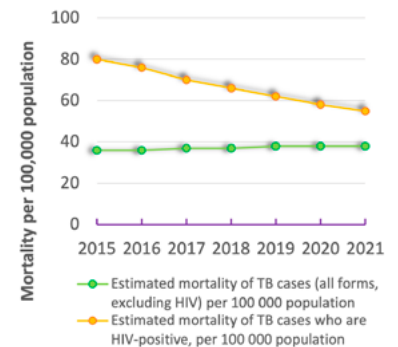
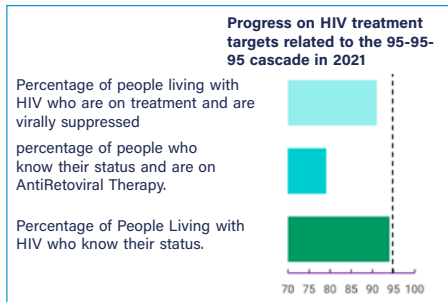
WUENIC estimates show that vaccination coverage bounced back in 2021.

South Africa however continues to record cases of rubella and pertussis. Measles outbreaks are reported.

HIV AND TUBERCULOSIS

- 5.5** people receiving antiretroviral therapy in 2021
- 78%** Treatment success rate for HIV-positive TB cases
- 57%** of children (aged < 5 years) household contacts of bacteriologically-confirmed TB cases on preventive treatment

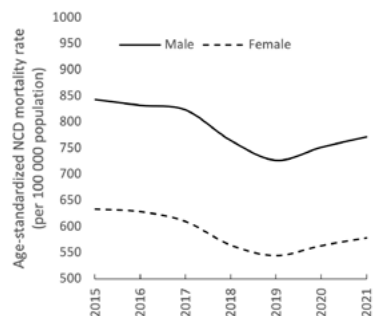
Unknown Domestic funding for TB
77% Domestic funding for HIV



- 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
- Onchocerciasis (non-endemic)

PC-NTDs treatment in 2020

0 Million targeted for MDA
0 Million treated with MDA

OTHER MAJOR NTDS

- Leprosy
- Taeniasis and cysticercosis
- Rabies

