

Country Disease Outlook

South Sudan

August 2023



World Health
Organization

African Region

Background

The Republic of South Sudan is a large country in northeastern Africa. It's landlocked and bordered by the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda. It is a low-income with a GDP per capita US\$ 1,072 (2021) and has a population of 10.7 million (2021).

Key points

- ◆ South Sudan has a high burden of communicable and non-communicable disease (NCDs), with the latter making up 28% of deaths in 2019.
- ◆ South Sudan is endemic for all five NTDs amenable to preventive chemotherapy through mass drug administration, reaching 91% of the 6.6 million people targeted for treatment (2021).
- ◆ South Sudan has 47,440 people receiving antiretroviral therapy in 2021 but has made limited progress towards achieving the 95-95-95 goals for HIV.
- ◆ A significant challenge is to sustainably increase the vaccination coverage rates and implement catch-up strategies to reach the cohorts of under-immunised and zero-dose children.
- ◆ Malaria is a leading cause of illness and death accounting for ~66% of outpatient consultations, 30% of admissions and 50% of deaths.

UHC/CN

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





2019

28%

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 28% of deaths in 2019.

Communicable diseases

Malaria

Malaria remains a public health problem in South Sudan, with an estimated 3 million cases in 2021 (with an incidence rate of 280.4 cases per 1000 people), resulting in 7,344 deaths. The country is off track to meet the Global Technical Strategy for Malaria targets. The incidence rate per 1,000 population has been relatively stable at around 270 since 2015, whereas the target incidence rate was much lower at 140 per 1,000.

Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS

Tuberculosis treatment coverage has progressively increased since 2015, with an 82% treatment success rate. The estimated burden is 227 TB cases per 100,000 in 2021. The mortality rate of TB cases (all forms, excluding HIV coinfection) has reduced since 2015, from 54 to 28 per 100,000 population in 2021, and the TB mortality rate among HIV-positive people has fallen from 13 to 8.5 in the same period.

Progress against the 95-95-95 goals has been limited:

- ▲ 35% of people living with HIV that know their status.
- ▲ 77% 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 47,440 people were receiving antiretroviral treatment in 2021.

Neglected tropical diseases

South Sudan is endemic for all five of the NTDs amenable to preventive chemotherapy through mass drug administration (MDA), namely lymphatic filariasis, onchocerciasis, soil-transmitted helminthiasis, schistosomiasis and trachoma. In 2021, there were 6.6 million people targeted for MDA, and 6 million were treated.

Other notable NTDs that remain endemic are dracunculiasis (Guinea worm disease), human Africa trypanosomiasis (*gambiense*), leishmaniasis (visceral), taeniasis and cysticercosis, leprosy and rabies.

Non-communicable diseases

NCDs are an increasing health problem in South Sudan. The age-standardised mortality rate across four major NCDs (Cardiovascular Disease, Chronic Respiratory Disease, Cancer and Diabetes) was 531 per 100,000 in males and 443 in females in 2019 (increasing from 513 and 433, respectively, in 2015).

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

Childhood Immunization

South Sudan's coverage rates of vaccination in children have historically been suboptimal, with the third dose of DTP-containing vaccine at 69% 2018-2021, down from a prior peak of 63% in 2012. Similarly, the measles vaccination coverage for the first dose was just 74% in 2021.

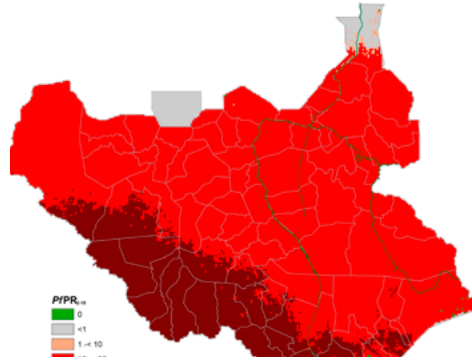
The low coverage rates have resulted in an estimated 168,691 under-immunised children and 146,924 zero-dose children in 2021. It is important for South Sudan to consider the implementation of catch-up vaccination strategies to protect these populations from vaccine-preventable diseases and reduce the probability of outbreaks.

Child survival

Based on the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME) estimates, the under-5 mortality rate has remained constant at 99 per 1000 live births between 2015 and 2021, significantly above the SDG target of 25 per 1,000 live births. Similarly, neonatal mortality remained constant at 40 per 1,000 live births in the same period, above the SDG target of 12.

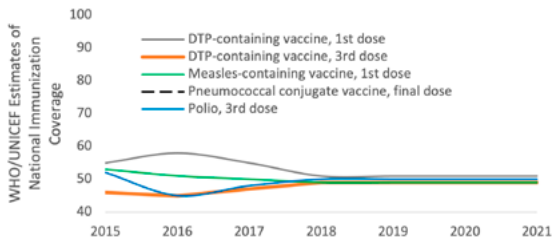
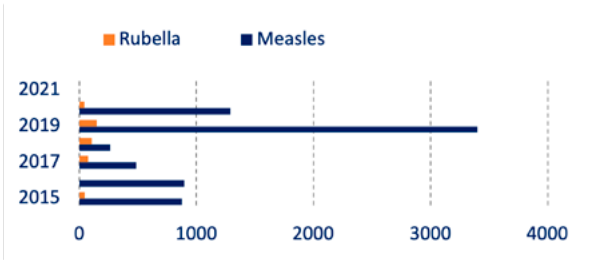
MALARIA

POPULATION AT RISK IN 2022	TOTAL MALARIA CASES IN 2021	TOTAL MALARIA DEATHS IN 2021
10.7 million	3.0 million	7,344

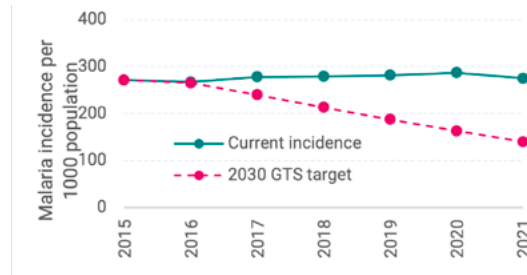


Plasmodium falciparum malaria prevalence in children in South Sudan in 2020. Estimates from the Malaria Atlas project

EXPANDED PROGRAMME ON IMMUNIZATION IN CHILDREN



Malaria incidence since 2015 compared to GTS targets shows that the country is not on track to achieve targets for disease reductions



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

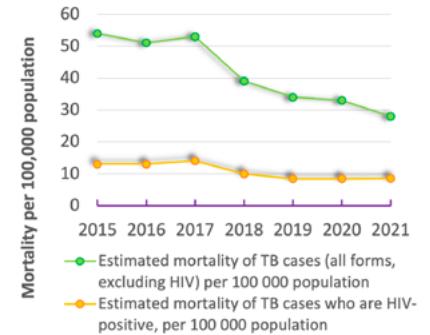
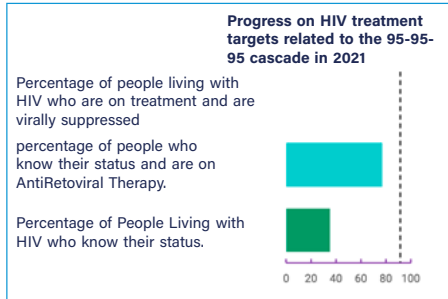
WUENIC estimates show historically low vaccination coverage has been <60% for most basic antigens. Highlights the need to increase coverage of basic vaccines in children.

There was a major outbreak of measles in 2019 with 3,401 cases reported

HIV AND TUBERCULOSIS

- 47,440** people receiving antiretroviral therapy in 2021
- 73%** Treatment success rate for HIV-positive TB cases
- Unknown** of children (aged < 5 years) household contacts of bacteriologically-confirmed TB cases on preventive treatment

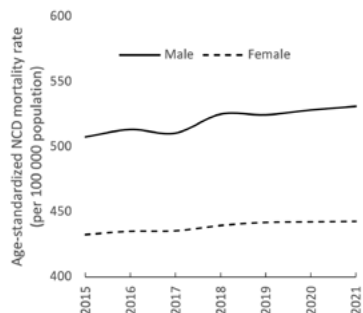
0% Domestic funding for TB
0% Domestic funding for HIV



- 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
- Soil-transmitted helminthiasis
- Schistosomiasis
- Trachoma
- Onchocerciasis

PC-NTDs treatment in 2021
6.6 Million targeted for MDA
6.0 Million treated with MDA

OTHER MAJOR NTDs

- Dracunculiasis
- Human Africa trypanosomiasis (*gambiense*)
- Leishmaniasis (visceral)
- Taeniasis and cysticercosis
- Leprosy
- Rabies