

Country Disease Outlook

Zambia

August 2023



World Health
Organization

African Region

Background

The Republic of Zambia is a landlocked country in Southern Africa. It is bordered by Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. It is a low-income country with a GDP per capita of US\$ 1,137 (2021) and has a population of 19.5 million (2021).

Key points

- ◆ Zambia has a high burden of communicable and non-communicable disease (NCDs), with the latter making up 35% of deaths in 2021.
- ◆ Zambia had 1.2 million people receiving antiretroviral therapy in 2021 and has made strong progress towards achieving the 95-95-95 goals for HIV, reaching 91-98-96 in 2021.
- ◆ Zambia's coverage rates of vaccination in children have historically been high, with above 90% coverage for the third dose of DTP-containing vaccine and the first dose of measles-containing vaccine in 2021.
- ◆ Zambia has improved its child survival rates between 2015 and 2021 but is not yet meeting the SDG targets.

UHC/CN

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





2019

35%

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 35% of deaths in 2019.

Communicable diseases

Malaria

Malaria is a significant public health problem in Zambia, with an estimated 3.7 million cases in 2021 (incidence rate of 189.7 cases per 1,000 people), resulting in 8,806 deaths. While Zambia was initially meeting the targets set as part of the Global Technical Strategy for Malaria target, the incidence rate did not reduce in line with the targets set since 2019, therefore the country is no longer on track to meet its targets. In 2021, there were 188 cases of malaria per 1,000 population.

Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS

The number of TB cases in 2020 was estimated at 59,000. With an estimated burden of 307 TB cases per 100,000 in 2021, Zambia is ranked 21st among the 30 high TB burden countries. The mortality rate of TB cases (all forms, excluding HIV coinfection) has decreased since 2015, from 30 to 21 per 100,000 population in 2021. The TB mortality rate among HIV-positive people has fallen from 84 to 21 in the same period.

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

- ▲ 91% of people living with HIV that know their status.
- ▲ 98% of people living with HIV who know their status are on treatment.
- ▲ 96% of people living with HIV and on treatment who are virally suppressed.

Approximately 1.2 million people were receiving anti-retroviral treatment in 2021.

Neglected tropical diseases

Zambia is endemic for four of the five NTDs amenable to preventive chemotherapy through mass drug administration (MDA), namely Lymphatic filariasis, soil-transmitted helminthiasis, schistosomiasis, and trachoma. In 2020, 5.3 million people were targeted for MDA and 6.1 million were treated.

Other notable NTDs that remain endemic are human Africa trypanosomiasis (*rhodesiense*), leishmaniasis (cutaneous), taeniasis and cysticercosis, leprosy

and rabies.

Non-communicable diseases

NCDs are a significant health problem in Zambia. The age-standardised mortality rate across four major NCDs (Cardiovascular Disease, Chronic Respiratory Disease, Cancer and Diabetes) was 938 per 100,000 in males and 599 in females in 2021.

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

Childhood Immunization

Zambia's coverage rates of vaccination in children have historically been fairly high, with the third dose of DTP-containing vaccine remaining over 90% since 2015, dipping to 88% and 84% in 2019 and 2020 respectively, but recovering to 91% in 2021. However, the measles vaccination coverage for the first dose has been above 90% since 2015.

In 2021, there were an estimated 58,435 under-immunised children and 38,957 zero-dose children. Zambia experienced outbreaks of measles, mumps, and rubella in 2020-21. Zambia 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 68 to 58 per 1000 live births between 2015 and 2021, remaining above the SDG target of 25 per 1,000 live births. The neonatal mortality rate reduced slightly from 26 to 25 per 1,000 live births in the same period, above the SDG target of 12.

MALARIA

POPULATION AT RISK IN 2022

19.5 million

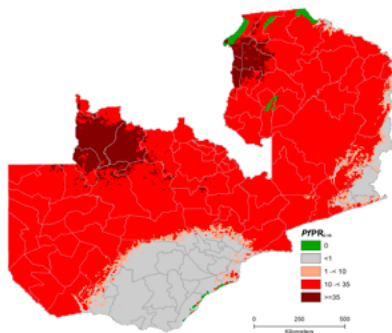
TOTAL MALARIA CASES IN 2021

3.7 million

TOTAL MALARIA DEATHS IN 2021

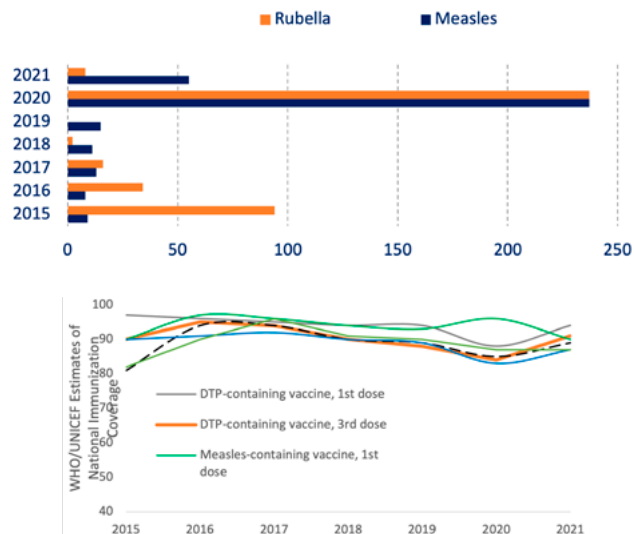
8,806

ITN use in children under five years 51.6% and 51.7% use of ACTs among those with fever for whom care was sought and received a finger or heel prick

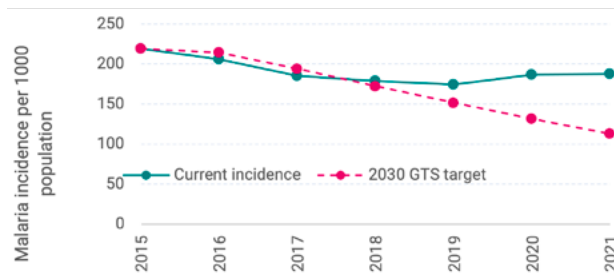


Plasmodium falciparum malaria prevalence in children in Zambia in 2020. Estimates from the Malaria Atlas project

EXPANDED PROGRAMME ON IMMUNIZATION IN CHILDREN



Malaria incidence in Zambia since 2015 compared to GTS targets shows that the country is not on track for GTS targets



Zero dose children 38,957

Under-immunized 58,435

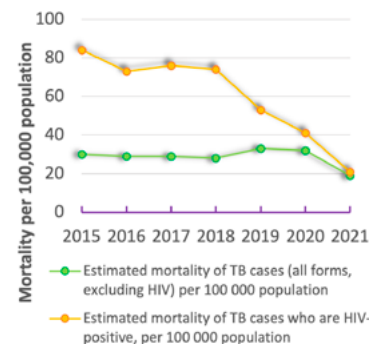
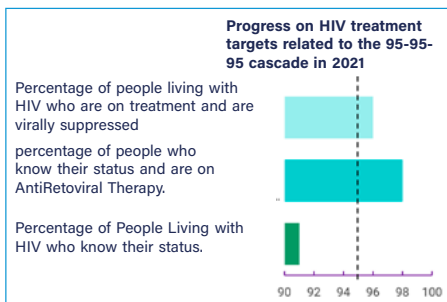
WUENIC estimates show that vaccination coverage bounced back to 2018 levels after a dip in 2020.

Measles and rubella outbreaks remain public health problems in Zambia with the most recent outbreak in 2020 when the coverage level dipped.

HIV AND TUBERCULOSIS

- 1.2 million** people receiving antiretroviral therapy in 2021
- 90%** Treatment success rate for HIV-positive TB cases
- 33%** of children (aged < 5 years) household contacts of bacteriologically-confirmed TB cases on preventive treatment

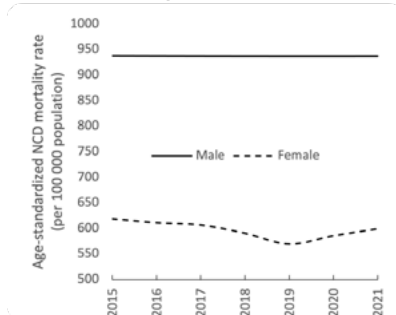
46% Domestic funding for TB
Unknown Domestic funding for HIV



- 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
- Soil-transmitted helminthiasis
- Schistosomiasis
- Trachoma
- Onchocerciasis (non-endemic)

PC-NTDs treatment in 2021
5.3 million targeted for MDA
6.1 Million treated with MDA

OTHER MAJOR NTDS

- Human Africa trypanosomiasis (rhodesiense)
- Leishmaniasis (visceral)
- Taeniasis and cysticercosis
- Leprosy
- Rabies

