**ITALY**



***MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION***

***inter-ministerial committee for human rights***

**ITALY’S CONTRIBUTION**

**“INPUT TO HRC RESOLUTION 47/17”**

*February 2022*

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Further to your query, we are in position to provide, **for your information only**, the following contribution.

On a preliminary note and, as a way of examples, mention can be made of the following: The data on new diagnoses of HIV infection and AIDS cases in Italy as of December 31, 2020 are published in the *Istisan Newsletter volume 34, No. 11* - November 2021.

The Surveillance System of new diagnoses of HIV infection and the National AIDS Registry are two dynamic databases, permanently updated by the continuous influx of reports sent by the Regions and by the reporting centers to the AIDS Operational Center (acronym in Italian, COA) of the *Istituto Superiore di Sanità* (acronym in Italian, ISS). The above COA publishes annually a dossier of the ISS Newsletter dedicated to the updating of these two surveillance streams (HIV and AIDS surveillance, respectively).

Since 2012, surveillance data on new diagnoses of HIV infection have national coverage. It should be noted that data for 2020 were affected by the Covid-19 emergency.

**New diagnoses**

- The incidence of new HIV diagnoses has been declining since 2012, with a more pronounced reduction since 2018, as particularly pronounced in the last year. In 2020, the highest incidence of new HIV diagnoses is in the 25-29 age group.

**New Aids cases**

- Eighty percent of reported AIDS cases in 2020 were people who found out they were HIV positive in the six months prior to their AIDS diagnosis.

- The number of deaths in people with AIDS remains stable.

The National Plan of Interventions against HIV and AIDS (acronym in Italian, PNAIDS) represents the programmatic document aimed at fighting the spread of HIV infection.

Provided for by Law No. 135/90, this Plan contemplates the implementation of multi-year interventions concerning prevention, information, research, assistance and care, epidemiological surveillance and support of volunteer activities.

This document acquired the favorable opinion of the Superior Council of Healthcare and was approved by Agreement in the State-Regions Conference of October 26, 2017. This Agreement established that the Ministry, in collaboration with the regions: will have to promote initiatives for training and updating operators involved in the care and assistance in places of care and assistance on the territory, of people with HIV infection and AIDS syndrome; will have to define information strategies in favor of the general population and people with risk behaviors (key populations).

The above Plan aims to outline the best possible way to achieve the objectives indicated as priorities by international agencies (ECDC, UNAIDS, WHO), making them feasible in our country.

**In particular, attention has been paid to the fight against stigma and highly effective prevention, based on scientific evidence and anchored on principles and actions that, in addition to including information campaigns, the use of prevention tools and interventions aimed at behavior modification, extend to the use of ARV therapies as prevention (TasP), with consequent impact on the reduction of new infections and respect for the rights of populations most exposed to HIV.**

**With regard to women**, in 2018, the Ministry of Health funded the Project, "HIV and sexually transmitted infections: interventions targeted at Italian and foreign women, in contexts of particular vulnerability, to ensure the taking charge and continuity of care", entrusted to the University of Milan - Department of Biomedical and Clinical Sciences 'L. Sacco' - Milan.

The Guidelines on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of Women Living with HIV Infection published in 2017 by WHO recommends a woman-centered approach, based on the guiding principles of respect for human rights and gender equality. Therefore, an integrated approach between the management of the more general aspects related to women's health (sexual and reproductive health, cancer’s prevention, menopause) and those of HIV infection is essential to improve the quality of life, adherence to therapy and therefore the clinical outcome of patients.

The above project aims, therefore, to accompany patients and partners at risk of HIV-positive people in paths of prevention and early diagnosis, taking into account their clinical and human needs and desires, and breaking down organizational barriers, through: 1. the experimentation of a multi-specialist care path of prevention, diagnosis and treatment in the context of an organizational system focused on patients with HIV infection, with their needs and preferences, activating the establishment of a dedicated outpatient clinic that will make use of the various professional figures needed; 2. the optimization of a care process, organizing visits in advance and scheduling them on the same day in order to limit both the dispersion of time and personnel, and the working hours lost by patients in taking care of their health. In particular, the service provides for the use of a nurse in charge of organizing the diagnostic pathway, which will involve booking the necessary examinations and visits as much as possible on a single date; 3. the collection of clinical data within a dedicated computer system of data storage (institutional database), accessible to the entire medical-nursing team, including those of other specialties, in order to facilitate the taking and keeping in charge; 4. The creation of an outpatient space dedicated to the counseling of partners at risk or in difficulty of HIV-positive people, in collaboration with voluntary associations, for the implementation of the objectives of the National AIDS Plan for HIV-negative people who are part of discordant couples.

**Conclusion**

Italian Authorities take this opportunity to reiterate their firm willingness of cooperation with UN Human Rights Machinery.