

A content analysis of policies, plans, and guidelines to integrate NCDs with HIV care in LMICs

Reet Kapur, MPH,¹ Abby Briggs,¹ Dina Moinul,¹ Teona Giorgadze,¹ Gloria Guevara Alvarez, PhD,¹ Jonathan Purtle, PhD,¹ Mari Armstrong-Hough, PhD,¹ Donna Shelley, MD MPH¹

¹New York University School of Global Public Health

Background: The growing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) among people living with HIV (PWH), especially in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), is threatening gains in life expectancy (1). Calls to integrate HIV and NCD-related care (2), have not been supported by clear guidance for achieving this goal. We conducted a content analysis of national documents to assess the extent to which LMICs are integrating NCD and HIV care.

Methods: We reviewed national level strategic plans, technical guidelines, and PEPFAR operational plans published in English between 2010 and 2023. We extracted documentation of screening and/or treatment of NCDs (hypertension, diabetes, cervical cancer, and depression), and/or NCD risk factors (alcohol and tobacco use), and facilitators to NCD-HIV integration (3).

Results: We analyzed documents from Kenya, India, Jamaica and Nigeria. Most acknowledged the importance of NCD-HIV integration; 91.7% mentioned cervical cancer screening and treatment, 66.7% depression, 59% hypertension and diabetes. Half the documents mentioned making improvements in **service delivery** (e.g., outlined clear protocols) and **health workforce** (e.g., increased staff). One-third (33.3%) mentioned improving **leadership and governance** by adopting global integration policies and public-private partnerships. Three documents each (25%) mentioned improving **information systems, medical products, and financing**.

Conclusion: The emphasis on cervical cancer likely represents recent efforts to address the higher risk among women living with HIV. Strategies to incorporate NCD care into existing HIV services focus on service delivery and workforce development. Integrating NCDs and HIV care will require country-specific guidance on strategies that facilitate NCD treatment for PWH in LMICs.

Learning objectives

1. **Explain** the concept of integration and why it is important to integrate care for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) with existing HIV care systems in low- and middle-income countries
2. **Describe** recommendations made by country governments and global organizations like PEPFAR and WHO to integrate NCD care delivery with HIV care systems in LMICs
3. **Compare and explain** how those recommendations are operationalized

References

1. Patel P, Rose CE, Collins PY, Nuche-Berenguer B, Sahasrabuddhe VV, Peprah E, Vorkoper S, Pastakia SD, Rausch D, Levitt NS; NIH HIV/NCD Project Disease Condition Technical Operating Group. Noncommunicable diseases among HIV-infected persons in low-income and middle-income countries: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *AIDS*. 2018 Jul 1;32 Suppl 1(Suppl 1):S5-S20. doi: 10.1097/QAD.0000000000001888
2. World Health Organization. Integration of noncommunicable diseases into HIV service packages: technical brief. Accessed March 27 2024. Available from: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240073470>
3. World Health Organization (WHO). Monitoring the building blocks of health systems: a handbook of indicators and their measurement strategies. Geneva, Switzerland: WHO;2010.