



CQUIN Differentiated MCH Workshop

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Addressing Congenital Syphilis in South Africa: A Data Driven Approach

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Objectives

The STI National Strategic Framework (2017-2022) commits the South African NDoH to two interrelated goals for syphilis:

Eradicate Congenital Syphilis

Antenatal care (ANC) coverage (at least one visit) $\geq 95\%$

Coverage of syphilis testing of pregnant women $\geq 95\%$

Treatment coverage of syphilis positive pregnant women $\geq 95\%$

Case rate of congenital syphilis ≤ 50 per 100 000 live births

70% reduction of Syphilis in General Population

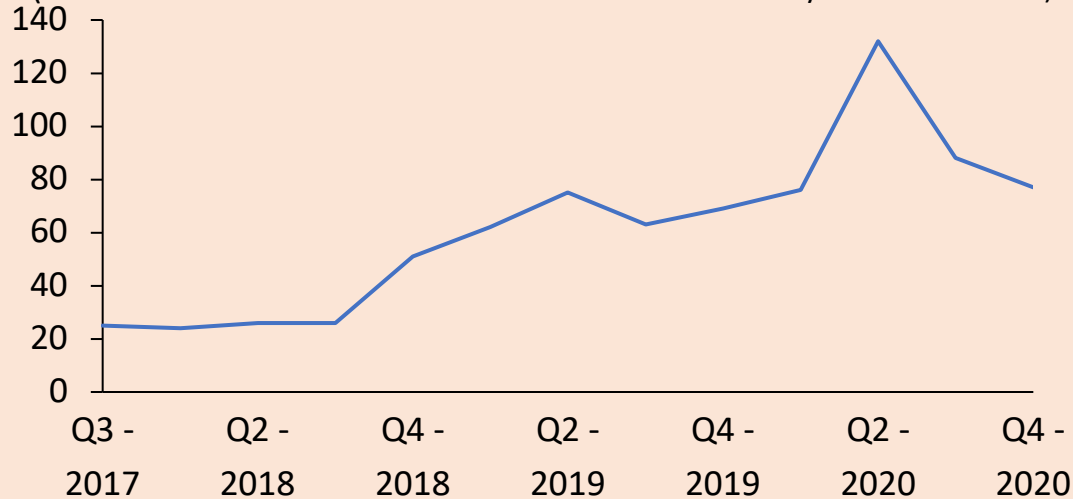
Current Status

Unfortunately, the data suggests that we have been moving backwards from those objectives over the past few years:

Objective 1: Eradicate Congenital Syphilis

Congenital Syphilis clinical notifications

(National Institute for Communicable Diseases Database July 2017 – Dec 2020)

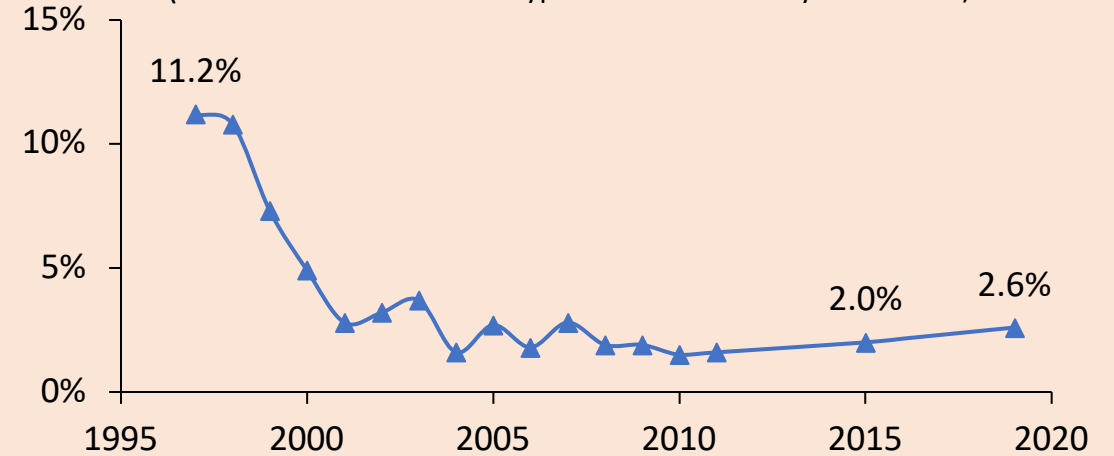


Congenital Syphilis notifications have quadrupled and positive RPR tests in infants have doubled since 2017.

Objective 2: 70% reduction of Syphilis in General Population

Syphilis prevalence among ANC Attendees

(National Antenatal HIV & Syphilis Sentinel Survey 1995-2019)



After decades of progress, Maternal ANC rates have increased significantly from 1,6% in 2011 to 2,6% in 2019.

Problem Areas

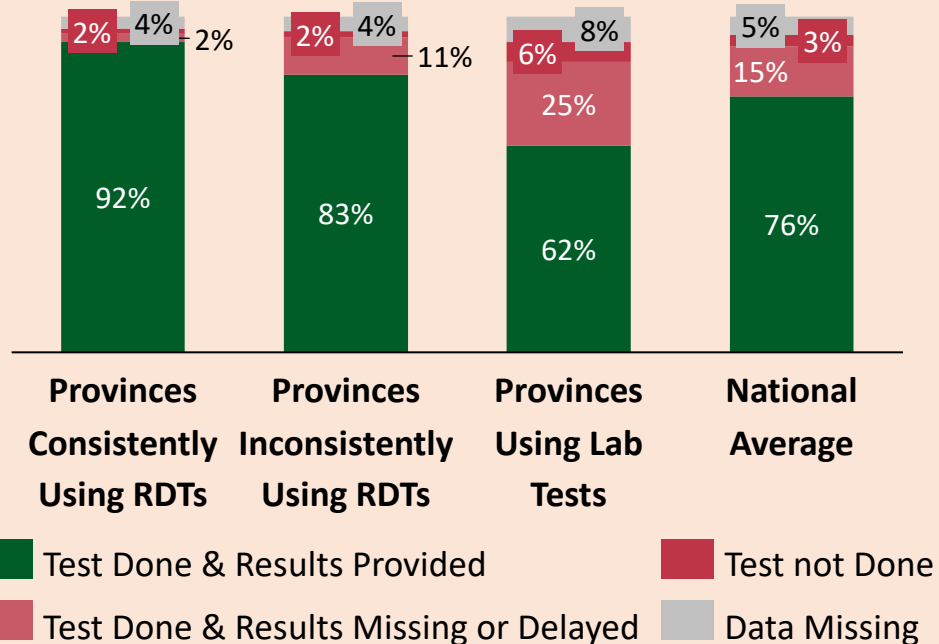
Equally though, the data clearly indicates what the problems are that need to be addressed to achieve these objectives:

Using Rapid Diagnostic Tests in a province increases testing with results provided by 30%

There is a challenge of stock availability with 70% of cases confirmed to have been treated appropriately

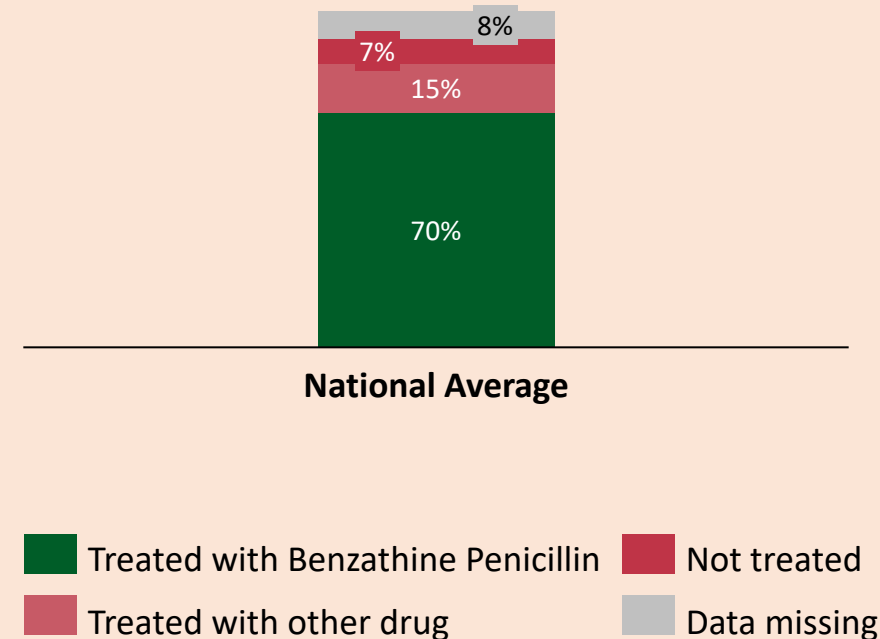
ANC syphilis screening coverage

(2019 National Antenatal HIV & Syphilis Sentinel Survey)



Syphilis treatment rates among ANC participants

(2019 National Antenatal HIV & Syphilis Sentinel Survey)



Interventions

The NDoH is in the process of actioning interventions to address these challenges, whilst also maintaining support activities:

Testing

- The NDoH is planning to implement a national tender for the Dual HIV / Syphilis RDT and single Syphilis RDT, anticipated to be rolled-out in ANC populations in Q2 2021.
 - This is anticipated to bring syphilis testing in-line with HIV testing in ANC, i.e. 97%

Treatment

- The NDoH is advocating with the regulatory body for expedited approval of new Benzathine Penicillin applications, and running a tender shortly after.
 - This is anticipated to bring syphilis treatment in-line with its former level, i.e. 95%

Supporting Activities

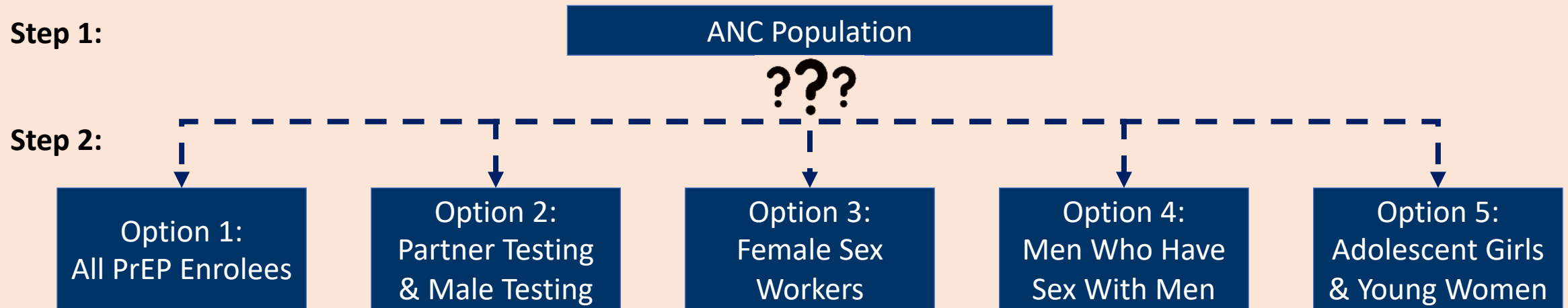
- Ensuring widespread availability of condoms in a variety of appealing options (male & female / flavored etc.)
- Running awareness building campaigns for HIV and STIs, targeted at key populations.
- Putting M&E systems in place to monitor and react to hotspots.

Continuing the Roll-Out of Dual Testing

Whilst the immediate interventions to address syphilis are clear, how to roll-out Dual RDTs beyond ANC for maximum impact is still in discussion

- In line with the current guidelines, it is clear that the 1st step for improved syphilis testing needs to be the ANC population and that will be the focus of the NDoH in the short-term.
- However, there are a number of options of where syphilis RDTs should be rolled-out next in order to achieve the maximum impact to our objectives. The NDoH has established a consortium of partners to model the best next step, which is due for completion and publication in Q2/Q3 2021. This will guide future implementation of syphilis RDTs in SA.

Roll-out Plan for Dual HIV / Syphilis RDTs



Action Plans

Recent Successes



Launched rebranded female condom supported by new condom communication plan



Rolling out updated STI strategy, guidelines and training



Ran an online STI awareness campaign reaching over 1,2 million young people

Current Focus



Introduction of Dual HIV/Syphilis rapid tests for ANC



Upgrading national STI M&E systems



Ensure ongoing stable availability of Benzathine Penicillin

Key Next Steps



Roll-out of STI rapid tests for additional populations



Improving partner notification / further integration with men's health