

Differentiated models to improve access and coverage of HIV services for migrant patients: The experience of Gaza Province, Mozambique

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BACKGROUND/INTRODUCTION

- In 2019, ART coverage of men in Gaza was at 40%, reinforced by a low presence of partners of pregnant women at antenatal care visits. Due to this low coverage of men accessing healthcare in Gaza Province, an assessment titled "Where are the Men?" was conducted, revealing that a large proportion of them resided outside the province (Unpublished data from EGPAF, 2019).
- The results also showed that 32% of those men residing outside the province of Gaza used to return once a year and 29% twice a year, with an average duration of staying in Mozambique for 17 days after returning to the province (Unpublished data from EGPAF, 2019).
- To adapt ART dispensation to lifestyle of these migrant patients, we offered them a specific package of 6 multi-month dispensing (MMD) that began in December 2019, followed by the introduction of 12MMD in December 2020 in the Gaza province.
- Objective:** To share experiences and insights from the implementation of 6 and 12MMD of ART in 14 health facilities supported by EGPAF in the Gaza Province in collaboration with the Provincial Directorate of Health in Gaza.

CLIENTS FOLLOW UP

- Migrants are defined as individuals who live in Mozambique, or within Mozambique but outside the province of Gaza, or who live in a district within the province of Gaza but in a different health catchment area between 15-49 years old.
- About 155 health providers from different categories (42 clinicians and medical technicians, 34 pharmacy technicians, 27 laboratory technicians, 28 data clerks and 28 lay counselors) were trained before starting implementation, followed by continuous training. The first training took place on 9 December 2019.
- The provision of those differentiated service delivery models was done in 14 health facilities (HF): Carmelo RH (only 6MMD), Chókwè HF, Hokwe HF, Urbano HF, Chibuto HF, Malehice HF, Chaimite HF, Xai-Xai HF, Chicumbane HF, Chissano HF, Julius Nyerere HF, Macia HF, Mazivila HF and Nhatutse HF.

MMD ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

6MMD	12MMD
Patient from Gaza, infected with HIV, residing abroad or in Mozambique (but far from the health facility where they normally receives HIV care in Gaza province)	Patient from Gaza, infected with HIV, residing abroad or in Mozambique (but far from the health facility where they normally receives HIV care in Gaza province)
Return to the health facility twice a year	Return to the health facility once a year
15+ years of age	15+ years of age
Not pregnant	Not pregnant
Must be present at the clinical appointment on the day of introduction to MMD	Must be present at the clinical appointment on the day of introduction to MMD
	VL collected 3 to 9 months before enrolment in MMD
	Viral load < 1,000 copies/ml

CONCLUSION

- Given the challenges in achieving global goals, the 12MMD can be considered to generate demand from migrant patients across the country and improve their clinical outcomes, such as viral suppression and retention.
- There is a need to evaluate other aspects such as costs incurred by patients, storage of ARVs for a prolonged period, as well as barriers and facilitators in accessing services.

DISCUSSION/DIFFERENT PHASES OF TRACKING PROCESS

2018	Programmatic discussions regarding the intention to introduce 6MMD in Gaza Province
May – June 2019	Implementation of the "Where Are the Men?" assessment
23 December 2019	Implementation of the 6MMD pilot
23 December 2019	Evaluation of the acceptability of the 6MMD
2020 – 2021	Periodic presentations on the status of the pilot implementation to the Ministry of Health (MISAU)
December 2020	Implementation of the 12MMD pilot for migrant patients
August 2021	Presentation of the pilot results at the National Meeting of the STI/HIV/AIDS Control Program
2023	Evaluation of the clinical outcomes of migrant patients enrolled in the 6MMD and 12MMD (secondary data)

PATIENTS ON 6MMD AND 12MMD UP TO JUNE 2023

Gaza Province	No	%
Total on ART	186,310	100
On ART with no MMD	31,168	16.7
On ART with 3MMD	149,349	80.2
On ART with 6MMD	4,987	2.67
On ART with 12MMD	806	0.43

CHALLENGES

- Accessing information about the migrant population in other guardianship institutions to increase demand creation;
- Return of patients to health facilities to receive services: clinical consultation, psychosocial support and blood collection for viral load during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Challenges in ensuring the delivery of medicines to patients during the COVID-19 pandemic (partially closed borders and high costs associated with sending ARVs to RSA)

Important note:

In 2022 the MOH of Mozambique approved a country-wide expansion of another package of 6MMD with a different eligibility criteria; Gaza Province was authorized to implement both models of 6MMD starting from June 2023 and the impact was a huge increase of patients enrolled into 6MMD. But for 12MMD, the criteria remained the same and Gaza is the only province implementing this model to date.

