



# Challenges and successes in PrEP for women in Ukraine in the COVID-19 era

Olga Denisiuk, MD  
Head of Program Optimization and Research Team (PORT)  
Alliance for Public Health

# WOMEN AND HIV

## Women

- more than half the number of people living with HIV worldwide.  
*(In 2017, there were 340 000 new HIV infections among adolescent girls and young women)*
- 10-24 years old are twice as likely to acquire HIV as young men the same age
- vulnerabilities created by unequal cultural, social and economic status
- reduced access to sexual health and HIV services



\*AVAC

\*\*UNAIDS REPORT 2020

\*\*\* Picture - UNAIDS - Women and HIV — A spotlight on adolescent girls and young women

08 MARCH 2019

# HIV in EECA

**Fastest growing HIV epidemic in the world.**

The epidemic continued to grow in eastern Europe and central Asia: new HIV infections rising by 72% between 2010 and 2019.

In 2019, the incidence:prevalence ratio of 10.1 was higher than in any other region globally.

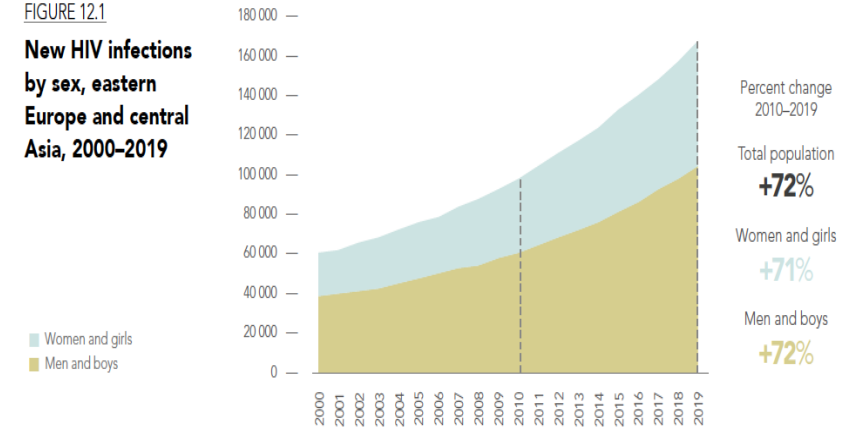
The vast majority of people acquiring HIV were in the Russian Federation and Ukraine= 84% of all new infections in eastern Europe and central Asian Region.

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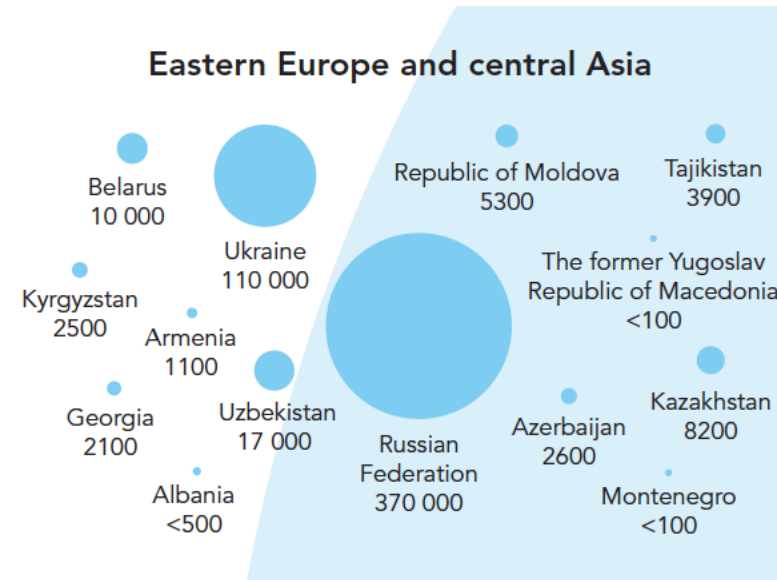
## State of the epidemic

FIGURE 12.1

**New HIV infections by sex, eastern Europe and central Asia, 2000–2019**



AIDS epidemiological estimates, 2020 (see <https://aidsinfo.unaids.org/>).



# Pre-exposure prophylaxis

**July 2012**, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the daily use of TDF/FTC as PrEP for sexually active adults at risk of getting HIV.

**June 2016** The WHO released updated guidelines: recommends that daily oral PrEP be offered as an additional prevention method to all people at substantial risk of getting HIV.

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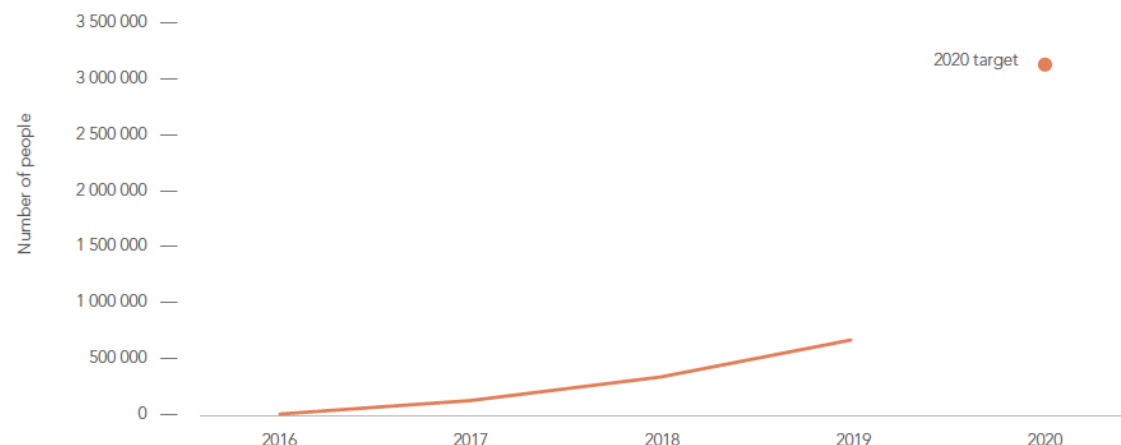
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FIGURE 2.17

Number of people who received PrEP at least once during the reporting period, global, 2016–2019

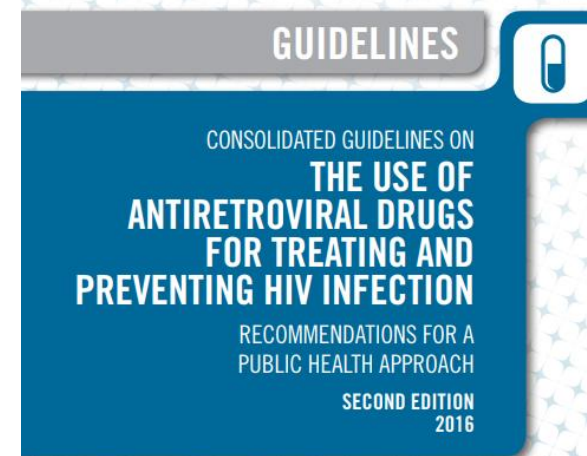
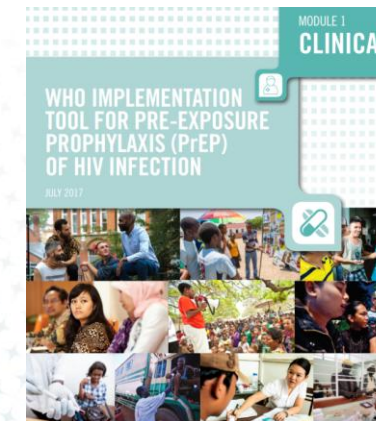


Source: UNAIDS Global AIDS Monitoring, 2017–2020 (see <https://aidsinfo.unaids.org/>); Country Updates. In: PrEPWatch [Internet]. AVAC; c2020 (<https://www.prepwatch.org/in-practice/country-updates/>); amfAR: PEPFAR Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Database [Internet]. amfAR; c2020 ([https://mer.amfar.org/Manual/PrEP\\_NEW/](https://mer.amfar.org/Manual/PrEP_NEW/)); Hayes R, Schmidt AJ, Pharris A, Azad Y, Brown AE, Weatherburn P et al. Estimating the “PrEP Gap”: how implementation and access to PrEP differ between countries in Europe and central Asia in 2019. *Eurosurveillance*. 2019;24(41); and country documents and meeting reports (available on request).

# Pre-exposure prophylaxis

Daily oral PrEP to be considered for HIV-negative people who are at substantial risk for HIV:

- are in a sexual relationship with a partner living with HIV
- do not regularly use condoms and who do not know the HIV status of their sexual partner(s)
- have a high number of sexual partners
- are engaged in commercial sex work
- have had a recent sexually transmitted disease
- use injectable drugs and share drug equipment, or have an injecting partner who is living with HIV



# PrEP in Women

Adolescent girls and young women:

- tend to perceive themselves as being at low risk of HIV and will be unaware of the need to protect themselves from HIV and other STIs through condom use or by taking PrEP
- many in age-disparate or transactional relationships are unaware that their partner could be engaging in multiple sexual partnerships.

\*AVAC

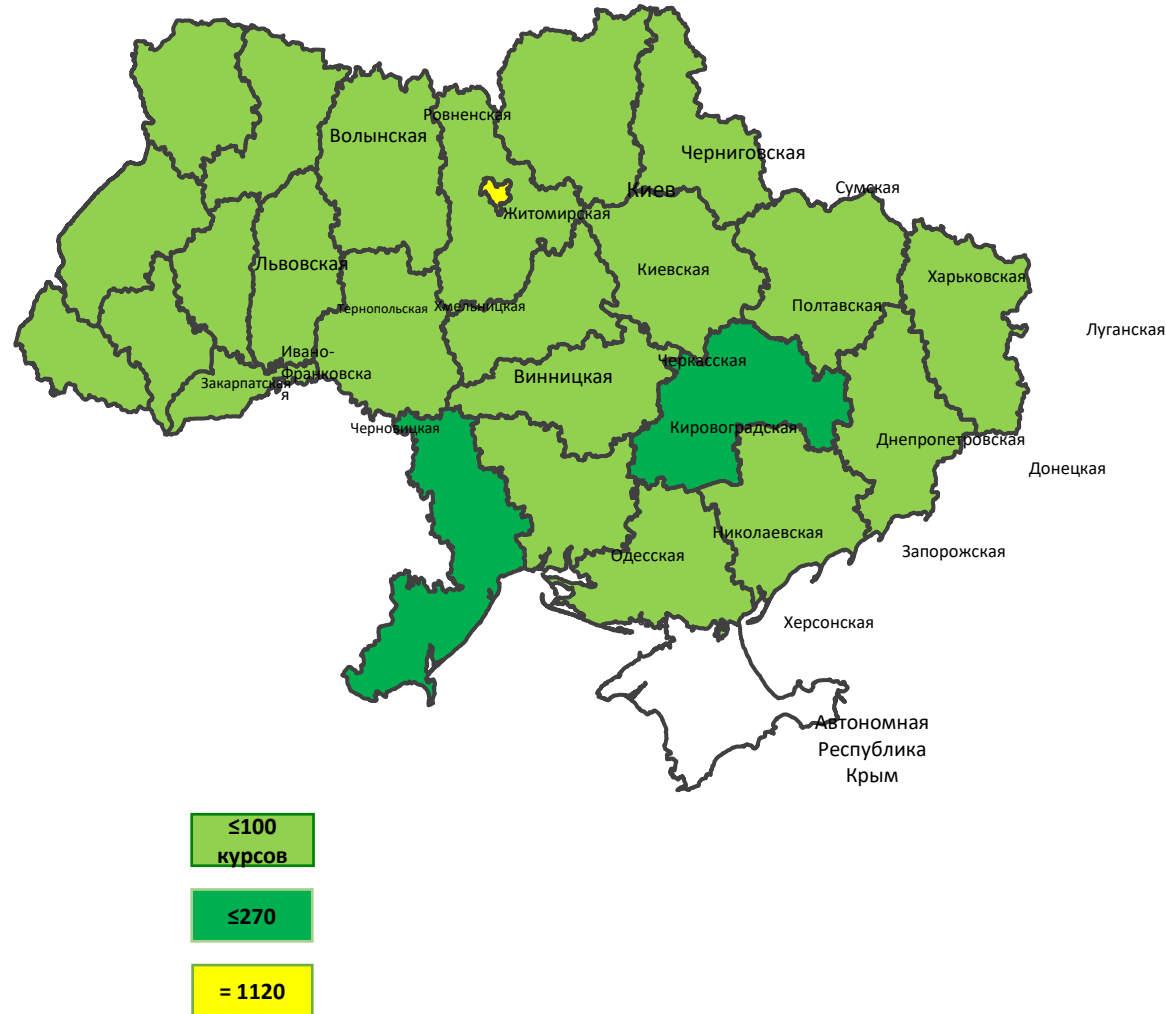
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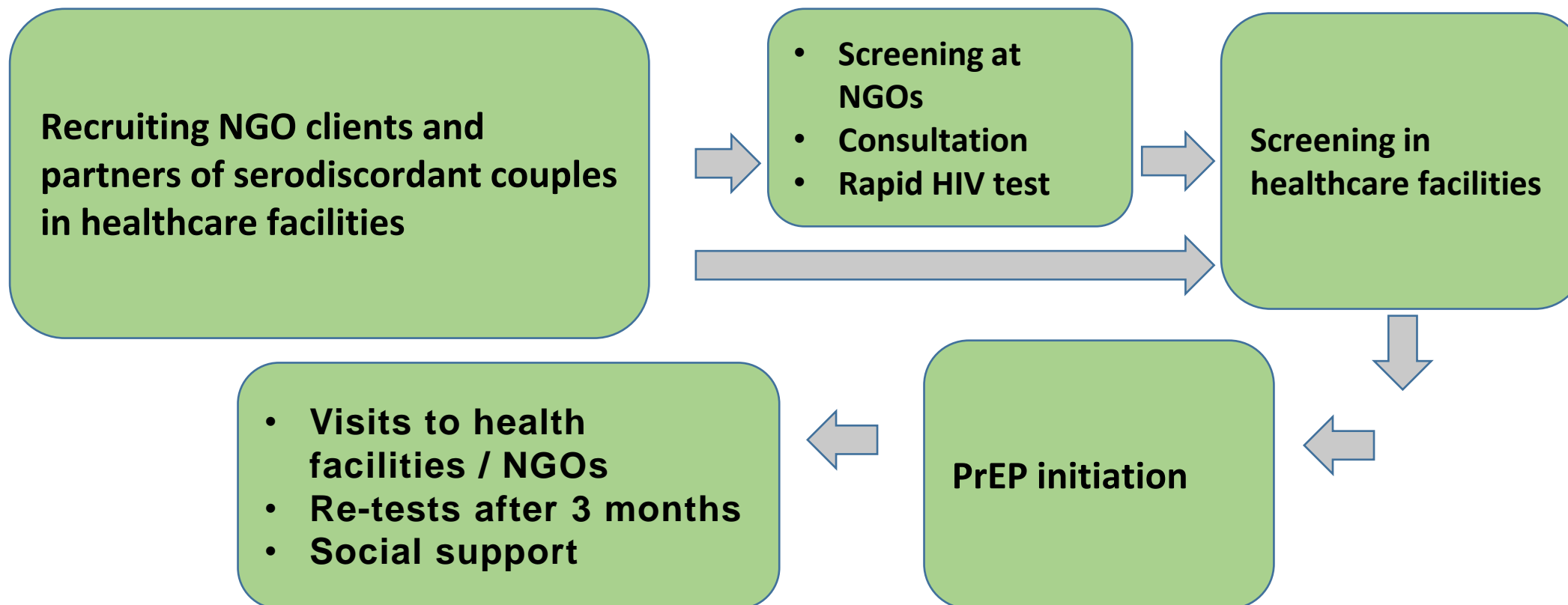


# PrEP Programs in Ukraine



- Social support has been implemented with Global Fund since 2019
- Geography: 24 regions and Kiev
- 26 NGOs in partnership with regional and city AIDS Centers / Institute of Epidemiology and Gromashevsky Infectious Diseases Institute
- Target population: MSM, HIV-negative partners of sero-discordant couples and people at high risk of HIV infection

# Project Algorithm



The total number of NGOs that provide PrEP related social support services to women – 18 in 17 regions of Ukraine and Kyiv city



# PrEP in Ukraine: Progress

Between September 2019 and August 2020, the total number of people who received PrEP is 2,219

Social support was provided to 252 women who started PrEP, including:

- sex workers 119
- PWID 9
- sero-discordant couples 77
- PWID partners 8
- transgender woman 1
- representatives of other contact groups 39

# PrEP in Ukraine: Covid-19 impact

**Has the Covid-19 affected the demand/access to PrEP among women?**

September 2019 - February 2020 **185 women**

After February 2020 ( the Covid-19 period) **193 women**

**Access to PrEP during the “strict” and “adaptive” quarantine measures:**

”Strict” quarantine 25 Mar - 21 May: **116 women**

”Adaptive” quarantine- 22 May -25 Jul: **79 women**

# PrEP in Ukraine: Covid-19 related Program changes

- Organized PrEP delivery via post/with the social workers/other means in order to reduce patients load on the HCS
- Additional working hours of medical doctors to provide services for patients on PrEP
- Intensified use of telephone/online counselling
- PPE and additional provision of informational materials for current and new PrEP patients

# Conclusions

- The adaptation of the services seems to have upheld the access to PrEP for women in Ukraine
- It would seem logical that COVID-19 has affected access to health care in general
- Further research is needed to assess the specific effect of COVID and how to compensate these effects in future epidemics

Thank you !