

# Manicaland HIV/STD Prevention Project Epidemic Status Report 2023

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## HOBHOUSE AND ALL SURROUNDING AREAS

#### INTRODUCTION

Round 7 was carried out from July 2018 to October 2019, round 8 was carried out from February 2021 to July 2021 (i.e. during the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic), and round 9 was carried out from July 2022 to December 2022 (i.e. as Covid-19 became less severe due to vaccinations and emergence of less deadly variants of the virus). This report compares the main results on local patterns of HIV infection, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), knowledge and awareness of HIV, and sexual and health-seeking behaviour between the 3 rounds. In rounds 8 and 9, extra questions were added about the Covid 19 virus. For these two rounds, HIV prevalence estimates are based on self-reports for new survey participants and for those who were uninfected in the last round in which they participated.

#### AREAS COVERED

The survey covered the following areas Hobhouse 1 and 2. In rounds 7, 8 and 9 of the survey, the numbers of adults who participated were 807, 647 and 1,086 respectively. These numbers fluctuated due to changes in migration and changes in survey eligibility criteria.

## **KEY RESULTS**

- 6% men and 8% women were infected with HIV in round 9 (July-December 2022)
- In all three rounds of the survey, HIV prevalence has been higher in men and women who report having had larger numbers of sexual partners in their lifetime
- Increases were found between round 8 ('during Covid'19) and round 9 ('as Covid-19 eased') in the proportions of men and women who reported having had a Covid-19 test, having tested and received a positive result, and having been vaccinated against Covid-19
- Whilst more people in round 9 ('as Covid-19 eased') than in round 8 ('during Covid'19) said they had *ever* been in contact with someone who had Covid-19, fewer people said they were at risk of getting infected themselves in the future
- The proportion of young women (aged 15-19yrs) who reported having started sex fell sharply from 29% in round 7 ('before Covid-19') to 16% in round 8 ('during Covid-19') and fell again slightly to 14% in round 9 ('as Covid-19 eased')
- The proportion of sexually active women who had a new sexual partner within a year increased sharply from 15% in round 7 (before Covid-19) to 43% in round 8 (during Covid-19) and declined abruptly to 12% in round 9 (as Covid-19 eased)
- Amongst women with a recent non-regular partner, the proportion reporting unprotected sex with this partner fell from 86% in round 7 ('before Covid-19) to 71% in round 8 ('during Covid-19') but increased again to 81% in round 9 ('as Covid-19 eased'). The proportion of these women reporting using pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) increased from 0% in round 7 ('before Covid-19') to 50% in round 8 ('during Covid-19') and fell to 17% in round 9 ('as Covid-19 eased')
- Fewer men had more than one sexual partner in the last month in round 8 (5.2% 'during Covid-19') than in round 7 (7.3% 'before Covid-19'). A further decline to 3% was found in round 9 ('as Covid-19 eased')
- The proportions of men and women reporting STD symptoms in the last 12 months remained stable from round 7 ('before Covid-19') to round 8 ('during Covid-19') but increased in round 9 ('as Covid-19 eased')
- HIV testing in the last 6 months in men fell from 28% before Covid-19 to 24% during Covid-19 and recovered to 33% as Covid-19 eased. For women, recent HIV testing fell from 42% to 34% before recovering to 36%

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# **HOBHOUSE GRAPHS**







