

Factors Associated With Achieving Viral Suppression Among People Living With HIV in Ghana: A Retrospective Analysis

Authors: Abdul-Wahab Inusah¹, Azugnue A Thomas², Nartey David Tetteh¹, Adiibokah Edward¹, Tagoe Henry¹, Issifu Zakaria Dindan¹, Amihere Felicia², Rahman Yussif Ahmed Abdul¹, Nagai Henry¹

¹JSI, ²Effia-Nkwanta Regional Hospital

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Tracking medication dispensation at a health facility in Ghana. Credit: JSI

INTRODUCTION

Viral load suppression remains a challenge to achieving epidemic control in most sub-Saharan Africa. Although Ghana made significant progress in the third 95 from 68% in 2019 to 79% in 2022, further insight into the factors associated with viral load suppression is critical. The USAID Strengthening the Care Continuum project, implemented by JSI, investigated factors associated with viral suppression among people living with HIV (PLHIV) in Western, North Western, and Ahafo Regions.

METHODS

The project conducted a retrospective analysis of 14,777 HIV clients with viral load results from the National HIV database system (E-tracker). These client data (2020-2022) were extracted on January 15, 2023 for Western, Western North, and Ahafo Regions. A stepwise regression model was used to determine factors associated with viral load suppression. The outcome variable was viral load status (suppressed, unsuppressed).

RESULTS

- Among the 14,777 clients with viral load results, 76% were females and the mean age of the study population was 42.
- From the results, **13,116 representing 88% of the clients were virally suppressed** (<1000 copies/mL).
- **Clients currently active on antiretroviral therapy (ART) were 1.8 times more likely to be virally suppressed** compared to those who interrupted treatment.
- **Clients on multi-month dispensing (MMD) were 2.3 times more likely to be virally suppressed** compared to single-month dispensing.
- **Clients initiated at hospitals had higher odds of experiencing viral load suppression** than clients initiated at lower-level facilities, i.e., clinics.
- **For every one-year increase in age, there was a 1.7 times increase in viral load suppression** and males were 0.8 times less likely to be virally suppressed.

CONCLUSION

Uninterrupted ART, hospital initiation, MMD, and age were positively associated with viral load suppression, while being male was negatively associated.

Scale-up of Ghana's differentiated service delivery policy, which provides for MMD scale-up and addresses the inherent challenges faced by sub populations, is a key intervention to achieving viral load suppression for better health outcomes.