

Country Disease Outlook

Central African Republic

August 2023



World Health
Organization

African Region

Background

The Central African Republic (CAR) is a landlocked country in central Africa. It is bordered by Cameroon, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo (Kinshasa), the Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville), South Sudan and Sudan. It is a low-income country with a GDP per capita of US\$ 461 (2021) and has a population of 5.5 million (2021).

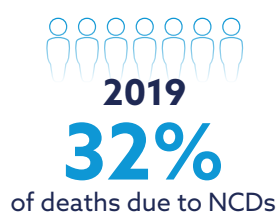
Key points

- ❖ CAR has a high burden of communicable and non-communicable disease (NCDs), with the latter making up 32% of deaths in 2019.
- ❖ CAR slightly improved its child survival rates between 2015 and 2021, however it is far from meeting the SDG targets for neonatal or under-five mortality rates.
- ❖ CAR had 56,123 people receiving antiretroviral therapy in 2021 and has met only one of the 95-95-95 goals for HIV.
- ❖ CAR is endemic for four of the five NTDs amenable to preventive chemotherapy through mass drug administration (MDA). In 2020, 84% of the 5.8 million people targeted were reached with MDA.
- ❖ CAR's vaccination coverage rates are suboptimal and the country is a long way from meeting the 90% target coverage rates for vaccination in children, reaching only 42% with the third dose of DTP-containing vaccine and 41% with the first dose of measles-containing vaccine in 2021. While strengthening the routine immunization system to reach new cohorts sustainably, CAR should also consider the implementation of appropriate catch-up vaccination strategies to protect these large cohorts of children from vaccine-preventable diseases and reduce the probability of outbreaks in the future.

UHC/CN

Universal Health Coverage/Communicable
and Non-communicable Diseases
WHO Regional Office for Africa





Broad disease outlook

The country has a high burden of both communicable (such as malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS) and non-communicable disease (NCDs). The latter was estimated to have caused 32% of deaths in 2019.

Communicable diseases

Malaria

Malaria remains a public health problem in CAR with an estimated 1.8 million cases in 2021 (with incidence rate of 334.7 cases per 1,000), resulting in 5,151 deaths. CAR's malaria incidence rate has been fairly steady since 2015 and the country is off track to meet the targets set by the Global Technical Strategy for Malaria.

Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS

In 2021, incidence of tuberculosis for CAR was 540 cases per 100,000 people. The mortality rate of TB cases (all forms, excluding HIV coinfection) is relatively high and has increased since 2015, going from 84 to 98 per 100,000 population in 2021. In contrast, the TB mortality rate among HIV-positive people has fallen from 123 to 28 in the same period.

CAR has met one of the 95-95-95 goals:

- ▲ 69% of people living with HIV that know their status.
- ▲ 98% of people living with HIV who know their status are on treatment.
- ▲ There is limited data on the number of people living with HIV and on treatment who are virally suppressed.

Approximately 56,123 people were receiving antiretroviral treatment in 2021.

Neglected tropical diseases

CAR was endemic for four of the five NTDs amenable to preventive chemotherapy through mass drug administration (MDA), namely lymphatic filariasis, soil-transmitted helminthiasis, schistosomiasis, and trachoma. In 2020, 4.9 million of the 5.8 million targeted (84%) were reached with MDA.

Other notable NTDs that remain endemic are Buruli ulcer, cystic echinococcosis, human Africa trypanosomiasis (*gambiense*), leprosy, taeniasis and cysticercosis, and rabies.

Non-communicable diseases

NCDs are a significant health problem in CAR. The age-standardised mortality rate across four major NCDs (Cardiovascular Disease, Chronic Respiratory Disease, Cancer and Diabetes) was high at 1167 per 100,000 in males and 810 in females in 2021.

CAR has implemented initial efforts on the NCD progress indicators related to NCD policy and plans and tobacco taxes, however progress has been more limited on all of the remaining NCD progress indicators relating to tobacco, alcohol, salt policies, trans fats policies, marketing to children and physical activity guidelines.

Childhood Immunization

CAR's coverage rates of vaccination in children have historically been suboptimal with rates under 50%. In 2021, the third dose of DTP-containing vaccine was just 42%, while the measles vaccination coverage for the first dose was 41%.

In 2021, there were an estimated 129,133 under-immunised children and 102,416 zero-dose children. While strengthening the routine immunization system to reach new cohorts sustainably, CAR should consider the implementation of appropriate catch-up vaccination strategies to protect these large cohorts of children from vaccine-preventable diseases and reduce the probability of outbreaks in the future.

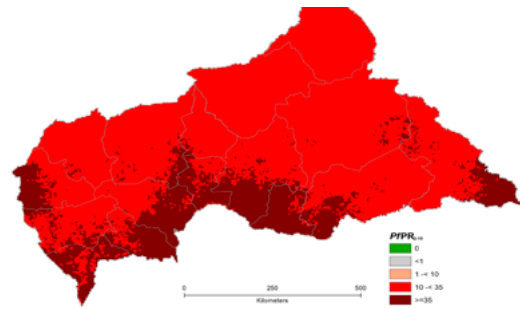
Child survival

Based on the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME) estimates, the under-5 mortality rate is the sixth highest globally. While it has fallen from 116 to 100 per 1,000 live births between 2015 and 2021, it is still far above the SDG target of 25 per 1,000 live births. Similarly, the neonatal mortality rate decreased from 34 to 32 per 1,000 live births in the same period, remaining significantly above the SDG target of 12.

MALARIA

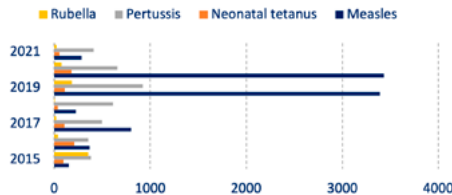
POPULATION AT RISK IN 2022	TOTAL MALARIA CASES IN 2021	TOTAL MALARIA DEATHS IN 2021
5.5 million	1.8million	5,151

ITN use in children under five years 52.2% and 42.0% use of ACTs among those with fever for whom care was sought and received a finger or heel prick

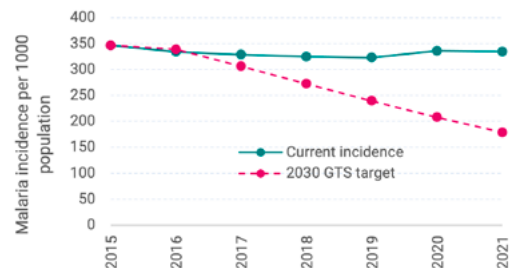
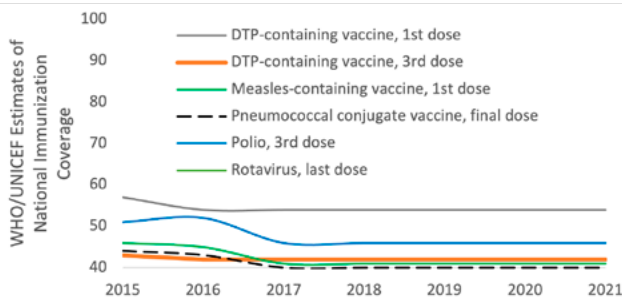


Plasmodium falciparum malaria prevalence in children in CAR in 2020. Estimates from the Malaria Atlas project

Malaria incidence in CAR since 2015 compared to GTS targets shows that the country is not on track for GTS targets



EXPANDED PROGRAMME ON IMMUNIZATION IN CHILDREN



Zero dose 102,416

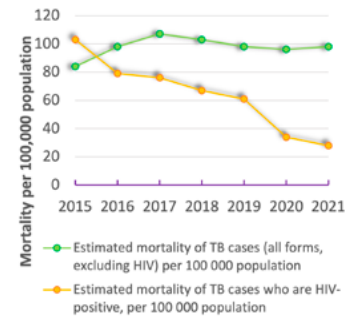
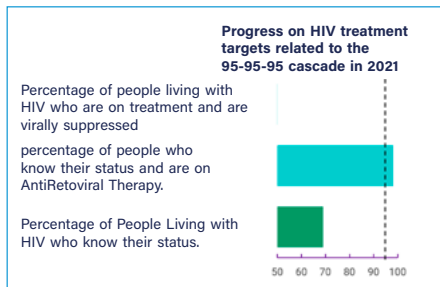
Under-immunized 129,133

WUENIC estimates show that vaccination coverage remains low in CAR. Measles, neonatal tetanus, pertussis and rubella remain public health problems in CAR.

HIV AND TUBERCULOSIS

- 56,123** people receiving antiretroviral therapy in 2021
- 83%** Treatment success rate for HIV-positive TB cases
- 50%** of children (aged < 5 years) household contacts of bacteriologically-confirmed TB cases on preventive treatment

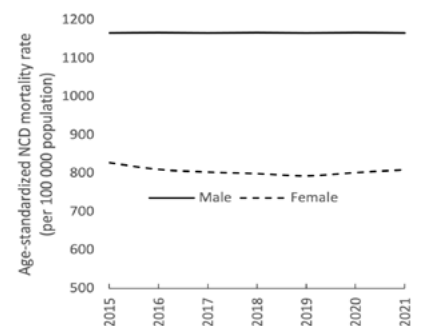
Unknown Domestic funding for TB
11.6% Domestic funding for HIV



- Indicator 1 - Targets
- Indicator 2 - CRV Mortality
- Indicator 3 - Surveys
- Indicator 4 - NCD policy and Plan
- Indicator 5A - Tobacco taxes
- Indicator 5B - Tobacco smoke free/polution
- Indicator 5C - Tobacco health warning
- Indicator 5D - Tobacco advertising ban
- Indicator 5E - Tobacco media campaign
- Indicator 6A - Alcohol availability
- Indicator 6B - Alcohol advertising restrictions
- Indicator 6C - Alcohol taxes
- Indicator 7A - Salt policies
- Indicator 7B - Trans fats policies
- Indicator 7C - Marketing to children
- Indicator 8 - Physical activity awareness
- Indicator 9 - NCD guidelines

NCD PROGRESS INDICATORS

- Achieved**
- Partially achieved**
- Not achieved/Unknown**



NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASES

Endemic NTDS requiring Preventive Chemotherapy (PC)

- Lymphatic filariasis (Eliminated)
- Schistosomiasis
- Soil-transmitted helminthiasis
- Trachoma
- Onchocerciasis (non-endemic)

PC-NTDs treatment in 2020
5.8 million targeted for MDA
4.9 Million treated with MDA

OTHER MAJOR NTDs

- Human Africa trypanosomiasis (*gambiense*)
- Taeniasis and cysticercosis
- Cystic echinococcosis
- Leprosy
- Buruli ulcer
- Rabies