

# HIV/AIDS Awareness, Knowledge and Behavior: Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey (RDHS) Key Findings

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## INTRODUCTION

The 2019-20 Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey (RDHS) is the sixth Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) conducted in Rwanda, following those implemented in 1992, 2000, 2005, 2010, and 2014-15. The National Institute of Statistics (NISR), in collaboration with the Ministry of Health (MOH), implemented the survey. Data collection took place from November 9, 2019, to July 20, 2020. The data collection was interrupted for more than 2 months from March 21 to June 7, 2020, due to the nationwide lockdown for the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Funding for the 2019-20 RDHS was provided by the Government of Rwanda, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the United Nations (ONE UN), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNWOMEN, and Enabel. ICF provided technical assistance through The DHS Program, which assists countries in the collection of data to monitor and evaluate population, health, and nutrition programs.

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## KNOWLEDGE OF HIV PREVENTION

The 2019-20 (RDHS) included a series of questions asked of both women and men that addressed respondents' knowledge of HIV prevention, awareness of modes of HIV transmission, and behaviors that can prevent the spread of HIV. Nearly all women (99.7%) and men (99.9%) have heard of AIDS. Table 1 shows that 92% of women and 95% of men age 15-49 know that consistent use of condoms is a means of preventing the spread of HIV. Eighty-nine percent of women and 87% of men know that limiting sexual intercourse to one faithful, uninfected partner can reduce the chance of contracting HIV. Finally, 83% of women and men, each, know that both using condoms and limiting sexual intercourse to one uninfected partner are means of preventing HIV.

## COMPREHENSIVE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT HIV PREVENTION AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

Table 2 presents information about comprehensive knowledge of HIV prevention among young people age 15-24. Comprehensive knowledge of HIV prevention is defined as knowing that both condom use and limiting sexual intercourse to one uninfected partner are HIV prevention methods, knowing that a healthy-looking person can have HIV, and rejecting the two most common local misconceptions about HIV transmission: that HIV can be transmitted by mosquito bites and by sharing food with a person who has HIV. Knowledge of how HIV is transmitted is crucial in enabling people to avoid HIV infection.

Table 2 shows that 59% of young women and 57% of young men have comprehensive knowledge of

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**Table 1: Knowledge of HIV prevention methods**

Background characteristic	Percentage of women who say HIV can be prevented by:				Percentage of men who say HIV can be prevented by:			
	Using condoms <sup>1</sup>	Limiting sexual intercourse to one uninfected partner <sup>2</sup>	Using condoms and limiting sexual intercourse to one uninfected partner <sup>2</sup>	Number of women	Using condoms <sup>1</sup>	Limiting sexual intercourse to one uninfected partner <sup>2</sup>	Using condoms and limiting sexual intercourse to one uninfected partner <sup>2</sup>	Number of men
<b>Age</b>								
15-24	90.3	87.2	80.4	5,672	93.1	85.5	81.1	2,486
15-19	89.1	85.9	78.6	3,258	92.5	84.5	80.1	1,526
20-24	92.0	89.0	82.8	2,414	94.1	86.9	82.7	960
25-29	93.2	89.6	84.7	2,073	95.7	89.1	85.5	710
30-39	93.7	89.8	85.1	4,190	96.0	89.1	86.0	1,628
40-49	93.8	89.4	85.3	2,699	95.2	85.4	81.8	1,022
<b>Residence</b>								
Urban	92.7	83.2	78.8	2,909	95.6	91.0	87.9	1,115
Rural	92.2	90.0	84.4	11,725	94.3	85.9	82.0	4,731
<b>Province</b>								
Kigali	91.3	80.3	74.1	2,166	95.2	95.7	92.5	879
South	92.0	92.9	86.8	3,065	94.6	88.8	84.9	1,239
West	92.4	89.9	83.8	3,174	94.7	88.4	84.0	1,268
North	92.2	88.6	83.7	2,226	93.8	77.2	73.7	886
East	93.2	89.1	84.8	4,003	94.7	84.8	81.1	1,574
<b>Education</b>								
No education	91.9	91.0	85.0	1,377	94.5	87.4	83.9	420
Primary	91.6	89.1	83.1	8,363	93.8	87.1	82.7	3,471
Secondary	93.4	88.3	83.6	4,252	95.6	86.1	83.2	1,659
More than secondary	96.2	81.1	78.9	642	98.3	88.5	87.0	295
<b>Wealth quintile</b>								
Lowest	90.3	91.0	83.8	2,741	93.3	85.3	80.8	924
Second	90.6	89.6	83.4	2,756	94.5	85.2	81.5	1,076
Middle	93.6	89.4	85.0	2,757	94.8	86.3	82.4	1,227
Fourth	93.7	90.3	85.5	2,966	93.9	86.7	82.7	1,278
Highest	93.2	84.2	79.3	3,414	96.1	90.2	87.2	1,342
Total 15-49	92.3	88.7	83.3	14,634	94.6	86.9	83.1	5,846
50-59	na	na	na	na	93.1	91.0	85.4	667
Total 15-59	na	na	na	na	94.4	87.3	83.4	6,513

Percentage of women and men age 15-49 who, in response to prompted questions, say that people can reduce the risk of getting HIV by using condoms every time they have sexual intercourse and by having one sex partner who is not infected and has no other partners, according to background characteristics, Rwanda DHS 2019-20.

na = Not applicable, <sup>1</sup>Using condoms every time they have sexual intercourse, <sup>2</sup>Partner who has no other partners, Ages were in years.

HIV prevention. Ever-married young women and men are slightly more likely to be knowledgeable about HIV prevention than young women and men who had never married. Among both sexes, the proportion with knowledge generally increases with age and educational attainment. Urban young people are slightly more likely than rural young people to have knowledge of HIV prevention.

## MULTIPLE SEXUAL PARTNERS

Limiting the number of sexual partners and practicing protected sex are crucial in the fight against the spread of sexually transmitted

infections, including HIV. Respondents to the 2019-20 RDHS were asked detailed questions about their sexual behavior, including the number of partners they had in the 12 months preceding the survey and condom use during their most recent sexual encounter. Table 3 shows that only 1% of women reported having multiple sexual partners in the 12 months preceding the survey and 9% reported having sexual intercourse with a person who was neither their husband nor lived with them. Fifteen percent each of never-married women and 27% of divorced, separated, or widowed women had sexual intercourse with a person who was neither their husband nor lived with them. Among

**Table 2: Knowledge about HIV prevention among young people**

Background characteristic	Women age 15-24		Men age 15-24	
	Percentage with knowledge about HIV prevention <sup>1</sup>	Number of women	Percentage with knowledge about HIV prevention <sup>1</sup>	Number of men
<b>Age</b>				
15-19	54.3	3,258	54.7	1,526
15-17	52.4	2,158	53.8	1,001
18-19	58.1	1,100	56.3	525
20-24	65.0	2,414	61.6	960
20-22	63.3	1,470	59.9	612
23-24	67.6	943	64.5	348
<b>Marital status</b>				
Never married	57.3	4,732	57.2	2,346
Ever had sex	60.2	1,151	61.5	707
Never had sex	56.3	3,582	55.4	1,639
Ever married	66.7	940	59.3	140
<b>Residence</b>				
Urban	60.3	1,140	64.7	462
Rural	58.5	4,532	55.7	2,024
<b>Province</b>				
Kigali	56.3	809	64.2	344
South	60.6	1,150	63.0	526
West	54.5	1,215	56.2	560
North	56.8	879	46.8	373
East	63.3	1,619	56.2	683
<b>Education</b>				
No education	49.1	77	(33.0)	49
Primary	52.6	2,778	52.4	1,336
Secondary	65.1	2,691	63.8	1,051
More than secondary	69.1	126	78.2	50
Total 15-24	58.8	5,672	57.4	2,486

*Percentage of young women and young men age 15-24 with comprehensive knowledge about HIV prevention, according to background characteristics, Rwanda DHS 2019-20.*

*<sup>1</sup>Knowledge about HIV prevention means knowing that consistent use of condoms during sexual intercourse and having just one uninfected faithful partner can reduce the chance of getting HIV, knowing that a healthy looking person can have HIV, and rejecting the two most common local misconceptions about transmission or prevention of HIV. Age was calculated in years.*

women who had multiple sexual partners in the 12 months preceding the survey, 45% used a condom during their last sexual intercourse. Similarly, 46% of women who had sexual intercourse with a person who was neither their husband nor lived with them used a condom during their last sexual intercourse. Women in Rwanda have had an average of 1.7 sexual partners in their lifetime.

Table 4 shows that 6% of men age 15-49 reported having had two or more sexual partners during the

12 months prior to the survey, while 12% reported that they had sexual intercourse with a person who was neither their wife nor lived with them. Among men who had two or more sexual partners in the 12 months prior to the survey, 29% reported using a condom during their last sexual intercourse. Seventy percent of men who had sexual intercourse with a person who was neither their wife nor lived with them used a condom during their last sexual intercourse. Men age 15-49 in Rwanda have had an average of 2.8 sexual partners in their lifetime.

**Table 3: Multiple sexual partners and higher-risk sexual intercourse in the past 12 months: Women**

Background characteristic	All women			Women who had 2+ partners in the past 12 months		Women who had intercourse in the past 12 months with a person who was neither their husband nor lived with them		Women who ever had sexual intercourse <sup>1</sup>	
	Percentage who had 2+ partners in the past 12 months	Percentage who had intercourse in the past 12 months with a person who was neither their husband nor lived with them	Number of women	Percentage who reported using a condom during last sexual intercourse	Number of women	Percentage who reported using a condom during last sexual intercourse with such a partner	Number of women	Mean number of sexual partners in lifetime	Number of women
<b>Age</b>									
15-24	1.2	10.1	5,672	44.8	69	45.7	576	1.8	2,089
15-19	0.6	6.1	3,258	*	21	42.8	199	1.6	539
20-24	2.0	15.6	2,414	(45.4)	49	47.3	377	1.8	1,550
25-29	2.3	12.2	2,073	(49.5)	48	52.0	252	1.7	1,853
30-39	1.3	7.1	4,190	44.8	54	44.9	296	1.8	4,059
40-49	0.8	6.4	2,699	*	21	39.1	174	1.7	2,667
<b>Marital status</b>									
Never married	1.4	14.7	5,914	61.0	85	47.5	869	2.1	1,956
Married/living together	0.7	1.1	7,401	(10.0)	53	46.0	78	1.4	7,397
Divorced/separated/ widowed	4.1	26.5	1,318	(55.0)	54	42.0	349	2.8	1,316
<b>Residence</b>									
Urban	2.5	13.3	2,909	54.6	73	58.6	386	2.3	2,101
Rural	1.0	7.8	11,725	39.5	120	40.5	911	1.6	8,567
<b>Province</b>									
Kigali	3.1	13.3	2,166	50.6	68	60.2	289	2.5	1,602
South	1.2	8.8	3,065	(38.2)	35	38.4	270	1.7	2,253
West	0.9	7.2	3,174	(54.5)	28	50.8	228	1.5	2,266
North	1.0	7.3	2,226	*	22	43.8	162	1.5	1,620
East	1.0	8.7	4,003	(38.5)	39	37.6	349	1.7	2,927
<b>Education</b>									
No education	0.8	7.1	1,377	*	11	28.9	97	1.8	1,312
Primary	1.5	9.0	8,363	41.5	126	42.5	751	1.8	6,621
Secondary	1.2	9.2	4,252	(62.7)	49	53.6	392	1.7	2,246
More than secondary	1.0	8.8	642	*	6	66.7	57	1.5	489
<b>Wealth quintile</b>									
Lowest	1.3	10.0	2,741	(27.1)	36	28.7	274	1.7	2,212
Second	1.1	8.4	2,756	(50.8)	29	36.5	232	1.6	2,025
Middle	1.4	7.0	2,757	(45.9)	38	45.7	193	1.7	2,004
Fourth	1.5	9.1	2,966	(62.9)	45	56.8	271	1.9	2,129
Highest	1.3	9.6	3,414	(37.6)	44	58.0	327	1.7	2,300
<b>Total</b>	1.3	8.9	14,634	45.2	192	45.9	1,297	1.7	10,669

Among all women age 15-49, percentage who had sexual intercourse with more than one sexual partner in the past 12 months, and percentage who had intercourse in the past 12 months with a person who was neither their husband nor lived with them; among those having more than one partner in the past 12 months, percentage reporting that a condom was used during last intercourse; among women age 15-49 who had sexual intercourse in the past 12 months with a person who was neither their husband nor lived with them, percentage who used a condom during last sexual intercourse with such a partner; and among women who ever had sexual intercourse, mean number of sexual partners during their lifetime, according to background characteristics, Rwanda DHS 2019-20.

**Note:** Figures in parentheses are based on 25-49 unweighted cases. An asterisk indicates that a figure is based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases and has been suppressed.

<sup>1</sup>Means are calculated excluding respondents who gave non-numeric responses. Ages were in years.

**Table 4: Multiple sexual partners and higher-risk sexual intercourse in the past 12 months: Men**

Background characteristic	All men			Men who had 2+ partners in the past 12 months		Men who had intercourse in the past 12 months with a person who was neither their wife nor lived with them		Men who ever had sexual intercourse <sup>1</sup>	
	Percentage who had 2+ partners in the past 12 months	Percentage who had intercourse in the past 12 months with a person who was neither their wife nor lived with them	Number of men	Percentage who reported using a condom during last sexual intercourse	Number of men	Percentage who reported using a condom during last sexual intercourse with such a partner	Number of men	Mean number of sexual partners in lifetime	Number of men
<b>Age</b>									
15-24	2.0	12.5	2,486	(59.4)	51	78.4	310	2.2	847
15-19	0.7	6.1	1,526	*	10	75.1	93	1.7	280
20-24	4.2	22.6	960	(64.9)	40	79.8	217	2.4	567
25-29	9.5	21.9	710	43.9	67	67.5	156	2.8	623
30-39	8.0	11.8	1,628	21.9	130	60.7	192	3.0	1,598
40-49	7.0	6.4	1,022	6.1	71	58.5	65	3.1	1,019
<b>Marital status</b>									
Never married	3.4	17.3	2,867	69.7	97	74.3	495	2.8	1,109
Married/living together	7.5	6.4	2,860	9.3	214	57.2	184	2.7	2,860
Divorced/separated/ widowed	7.7	36.7	119	*	9	(67.6)	44	5.3	119
<b>Type of union</b>									
In polygynous union	58.6	20.9	77	(7.3)	45	*	16	6.5	77
Not in polygynous union	6.1	6.0	2,783	9.8	169	56.2	168	2.6	2,783
Not currently in union	3.5	18.0	2,986	68.8	106	73.8	539	3.1	1,227
<b>Residence</b>									
Urban	7.6	20.3	1,115	33.6	85	71.9	226	4.4	811
Rural	5.0	10.5	4,731	27.2	235	68.5	496	2.4	3,277
<b>Province</b>									
Kigali	7.5	20.3	879	43.7	66	69.5	178	4.6	642
South	3.8	10.3	1,239	20.2	48	60.6	128	2.3	855
West	6.2	11.0	1,268	22.8	78	70.8	140	2.6	876
North	3.4	9.9	886	(21.9)	30	71.0	88	2.1	621
East	6.2	12.0	1,574	30.4	98	74.2	189	2.8	1,094
<b>Education</b>									
No education	5.9	6.1	420	*	25	(50.6)	25	2.5	388
Primary	5.5	11.3	3,471	24.9	192	65.0	393	2.8	2,584
Secondary	5.2	14.8	1,659	40.3	86	77.9	246	3.1	867
More than secondary	6.3	19.7	295	*	18	73.8	58	3.2	249
<b>Wealth quintile</b>									
Lowest	5.0	10.6	924	(19.1)	47	54.4	97	2.4	702
Second	3.4	8.4	1,076	(23.2)	36	63.1	90	2.4	737
Middle	5.8	10.4	1,227	24.8	71	66.4	128	2.3	841
Fourth	6.1	12.9	1,278	34.8	78	78.8	165	3.1	882
Highest	6.6	18.1	1,342	34.6	88	73.5	243	3.8	926
Total 15-49	5.5	12.4	5,846	28.9	320	69.6	723	2.8	4,088
50-59	4.1	3.7	667	(26.3)	27	(52.9)	25	4.1	661
Total 15-59	5.3	11.5	6,513	28.7	347	69.0	747	3.0	4,748

Among all men age 15-49, percentage who had sexual intercourse with more than one sexual partner in the past 12 months, and percentage who had intercourse in the past 12 months with a person who was neither their wife nor lived with them; among those having more than one partner in the past 12 months, percentage reporting that a condom was used during last intercourse; among men age 15-49 who had sexual intercourse in the past 12 months with a person who was neither their wife nor lived with them, percentage who used a condom during last sexual intercourse with such a partner; and among men who ever had sexual intercourse, mean number of sexual partners during their lifetime, according to background characteristics, Rwanda DHS 2019-20.

**Note:** Note: Figures in parentheses are based on 25-49 unweighted cases. An asterisk indicates that a figure is based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases and has been suppressed.

<sup>1</sup>Means are calculated excluding respondents who gave non-numeric responses, Ages were in years.

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