

Integrated national guidelines for HIV prevention, treatment, and care: Chapters 5 and 6

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ABSTRACT

These guidelines were developed taking into consideration the guiding principles of the WHO 2013 consolidated guidelines on the use of antiretrovirals (ARVs) and the President's Comprehensive Response Plan for HIV/AIDS in Nigeria. It is intended to fast-track the achievement of universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care, and support in Nigeria. Guiding principles of these Guidelines includes the followings: (a) Public health approach - In line with the National scale-up strategy of decentralization and integration, these guidelines are based on a public health approach to scaling up the use of ARV drugs for HIV treatment and prevention. The public health approach will ensure access to high-quality services at all levels of the health-care system including the community and primary health care settings, with a focus on the best practices that are commensurate with available resources at all levels. (b) Implementation based on national context - Implementation of the recommendations in these guidelines will be informed by national context, including HIV epidemiology, availability of resources, the organization and capacity of the health system, and anticipated cost-effectiveness. While aiming to achieve attainment of the global milestones, the best practices within the country will be further refined, promoted, implemented, and scaled up nationwide. (c) Strengthening health systems through innovation and learning - Strengthening health systems recommended and described in these guidelines will be implemented with a view to strengthening the continuum of HIV care and broader health systems, especially primary care and chronic care. As more lessons are learned from ongoing integration and decentralization of HIV services at lower-level health facilities, implementation is encouraged and findings widely disseminated.

Key words: Antiretroviral therapy, Guideline, HIV, Nigeria, prevention of mother-to-child transmission

CHAPTER 5: PREVENTION OF MOTHER-TO-CHILD TRANSMISSION OF HIV INFECTION

Mother-to-child transmission of HIV

Most children <15 years living with HIV acquire the infection through mother-to-child transmission (MTCT). This can occur during pregnancy, labor, and delivery or breastfeeding. In the absence of interventions, the risk of MTCT is 25–40%.

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The high burden of MTCT of HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa including Nigeria is due to high rates of heterosexual transmission, high prevalence of HIV in women of reproductive age, high total fertility rate, characteristically prolonged breastfeeding culture, suboptimal infection prevention measures during labor and delivery, and limited access to general HIV prevention interventions. Transmission of HIV in children has become a critical health challenge that threatens to undermine the gains of child survival strategies in the African continent.

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