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Higher Baseline CD4 and Treatment Initiation Among Contacts of PLHIV: Thailand, 2020-2023

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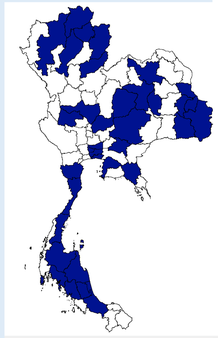
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BACKGROUND

In 2020, approximately 50% of newly diagnosed persons living with HIV (PLHIV) had a baseline CD4 <200 cells/μL in Thailand. As a result, the Ministry of Public Health implemented and expanded the national index partner testing (IPT) program to increase early HIV detection (baseline CD4 ≥200 cells/μL) and rapid antiretroviral (ART) treatment initiation. We analyzed trends in baseline CD4 and ART initiation and investigated factors associated with ART initiation among contacts of PLHIV in 2020-2023.

METHODS

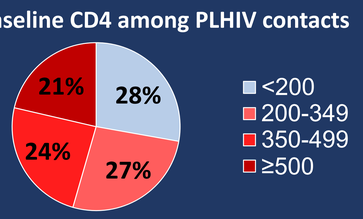


- IPT services were offered to all PLHIV ≥ 1 years of age at 144 health facilities.
- Contacts of PLHIV were defined as sexual and drug injecting contact in the past year, biological children, or biological parents if child was PLHIV.
- Contacts were elicited and offered HIV testing and linkage to ART.
- We collected contact's demographic and clinical data using an online monitoring system.
- Linkage to ART and analysis of factors associated with ART initiation among contacts of PLHIV was conducted for those testing HIV positive.





Overall, 72% of PLHIV contacts had a baseline CD4 over 200 cells/μL



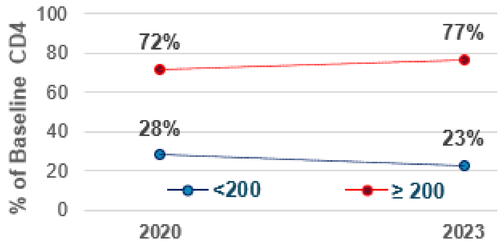
ART initiation slightly increased from 87.4% in 2020 to 88.5% in 2023 (p<0.001)

Contacts who self-reported as HRP vs. those who did not report **(AOR 2.59; 95% CI: 2.26-2.97), had sex with the PLHIV** vs. those who had a biologic relationship **(AOR 2.8; 95% CI: 1.18-6.88),** and **was a contact of PLHIV diagnosed >12 months** vs. contact of a newly diagnosed PLHIV **(AOR 1.69; 95% CI: 1.52-1.88)** were associated with ART initiation.

RESULTS

Of 6,541 contacts elicited and tested, 1,683 (25.7%) tested HIV-positive. Of these, the median age was 34 years (IQR: 26-43), 1,135 (67.4%) were male, 1,290 (76.6%) were ≥25 years, 529 (31.4%) self-reported as high-risk population (HRP), 1,572 (93.4%) were sexual contacts, 682 (40.5%) were contacts of newly diagnosed PLHIV, 1,487 (88.4%) initiated ART, and 771 (45.8%) had baseline CD4 information. Higher median baseline CD4 was reported in 2023 (351 cells/μL, IQR: 218-479) than in 2020 (318 cells/μL, IQR:182-481) (p=0.23).

Percentage of baseline CD4 category among contacts of PLHIV



Multivariate analysis of factors associated with treatment initiation among contacts of PLHIV

Characteristics	AOR (95%CI)
HRP classification	
Non-HRPs	ref
HRPs	2.59 (2.26-2.97) *
Relationship with PLHIV	
Biological contact	ref
Sexual contact	2.80 (1.18-6.88) *
Sexual and needle sharing contact	2.26 (0.93-5.63)
PLHIV information of contact	
PLHIV diagnosed >12 mo.	1.69 (1.52-1.88) *
Newly diagnosed PLHIV	ref

*Statistical significant at *P≤0.05.*

CONCLUSIONS

Most contacts of PLHIV testing positive had a baseline CD4 count greater than 200 cells/μL. The slight increase in baseline CD4 count and ART uptake among contacts of PLHIV over time may indicate the effectiveness of the IPT services program. Programs may consider integrating HIV self-test or other services to improve case finding among contacts of index cases.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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DISCLAIMER

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