



MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Lesotho



**Demographic and
Health Survey**

2014

Supplement on HIV Viral Load



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Additional information about the 2014 LDHS may be obtained from the Ministry of Health, P.O. Box 514, Maseru, Lesotho; Telephone: +266-22-314404; Internet: <http://www.gov.ls/health/>.

Information about The DHS Program may be obtained from ICF, 530 Gaither Road, Suite 500, Rockville, MD 20850, USA; Telephone: +1-301-407-6500; Fax: +1-301-407-6501; E-mail: info@DHSprogram.com; Internet: www.DHSprogram.com.

Cover photo of Maletsuyane Falls near Semonkong, Lesotho, is provided courtesy of Joanna Lowell, ICF.

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BACKGROUND

HIV prevalence and incidence data from the 2014 Lesotho Demographic and Health Survey (2014 LDHS) are presented in Chapter 13 of the 2014 LDHS final report¹. The HIV testing methodology is described in Appendix C of the same report.

All blood specimens that were confirmed as positive for HIV were subjected to viral load testing. Of the 1,374 specimens from women and men age 15-49, 97% had a valid result for viral load measurement (data not shown). It is worth noting that specimens that were rendered preliminary recent in the incidence testing algorithm are more likely to be missing viral load results than specimens that were rendered long term (see Appendix C of the 2014 LDHS final report). This could result in a very small under-estimation of viral suppression.

RESULTS

As shown in **Table S.1**, 58% of HIV-positive adults age 15-49 are virally suppressed, defined as having a HIV viral load of less than 1000 copies per milliliter (mL). Viral suppression is slightly higher for women than men; 60% of women and 54% of men age 15-49 are virally suppressed.

Patterns by background characteristics

- The proportion of women and men who are virally suppressed is higher in rural areas than urban areas; overall, 65% of HIV-positive women from rural areas are virally suppressed compared with 53% of HIV-positive women from urban areas. Similarly, 58% of HIV-positive men from rural areas are virally suppressed compared with 49% of HIV-positive men from urban areas.
- The proportion of HIV-positive women who are virally suppressed generally declines with increasing education; 66% of women with primary incomplete education are virally suppressed compared with 50% of women with more than secondary education.
- In marked contrast to HIV-positive women, the proportion of HIV-positive men who are virally suppressed increases with educational attainment; 48% of men with no education are virally suppressed compared with 58% of men with secondary education.

¹ Ministry of Health [Lesotho] and ICF International. 2016. *Lesotho Demographic and Health Survey 2014*. Maseru, Lesotho: Ministry of Health and ICF International.

Table S.1 HIV viral suppression

Percentage of HIV positive women and men age 15-49 who are virally suppressed, according to background characteristics, Lesotho 2014

Background characteristic	Women		Men		Total	
	Percentage virally suppressed ¹	Number of HIV positive respondents	Percentage virally suppressed ¹	Number of HIV positive respondents	Percentage virally suppressed ¹	Number of HIV positive respondents
Age						
15-19	(43.5)	37	(59.6)	28	50.4	65
20-24	51.5	135	(62.6)	42	54.2	177
25-29	58.8	193	40.9	71	54.0	264
30-34	53.8	195	45.1	84	51.2	279
35-39	64.3	146	50.8	110	58.5	256
40-44	81.2	120	62.6	93	73.1	213
45-49	61.4	85	(69.9)	49	64.5	134
Marital status						
Never married	55.8	166	59.7	121	57.4	287
Married or living together	60.4	516	55.4	281	58.6	797
Divorced/separated/ widowed	62.5	230	40.4	73	57.2	304
Residence						
Urban	53.2	393	48.6	205	51.6	598
Rural	65.4	519	58.3	272	63.0	790
Ecological zone						
Lowlands	58.8	614	52.6	335	56.7	949
Foothills	63.1	81	(57.7)	45	61.2	126
Mountains	63.7	159	53.8	68	60.7	227
Senqu River Valley	59.4	58	(67.4)	28	62.0	87
District						
Butha-Buthe	56.0	41	(47.9)	28	52.7	69
Leribe	65.8	154	(64.6)	67	65.4	222
Berea	62.1	127	53.3	65	59.1	192
Maseru	54.8	289	52.0	175	53.7	465
Mafeteng	60.7	72	43.6	50	53.7	121
Mohale's Hoek	64.6	64	(73.4)	25	67.1	90
Quthing	66.0	41	65.1	12	65.8	53
Qacha's Nek	66.3	26	(53.0)	9	62.7	35
Mokhotlong	60.8	38	(57.3)	12	60.0	50
Thaba-Tseka	57.1	59	(47.6)	32	53.8	91
Education						
No education	*	8	48.2	60	47.7	69
Primary incomplete	65.8	179	50.1	157	58.4	336
Primary complete	65.1	243	52.9	62	62.7	304
Secondary	56.5	426	57.8	175	56.9	601
More than secondary	50.2	56	*	22	56.9	78
Wealth quintile						
Lowest	67.6	108	52.7	70	61.7	178
Second	63.6	127	63.6	71	63.6	197
Middle	67.3	171	53.1	90	62.4	261
Fourth	59.6	267	57.9	129	59.1	396
Highest	50.3	240	45.9	116	48.9	355
Total 15-49	60.1	912	54.2	476	58.1	1,388
50-59	na	na	69.3	77	na	na
Total 15-59	na	na	56.3	553	na	na

Notes: Table excludes HIV positive respondents for whom HIV viral load is missing. 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.

na = not applicable

¹ Viral suppression is defined as having an HIV viral load of less than 1000 copies/mL.