

## Challenges and Proposed Actions for HIV/AIDS Control among Children in Iran

Salman Khazaei<sup>1</sup>, Kamyar Mansori<sup>2</sup>, Mokhtar Soheilyzad<sup>3</sup>, \*Erfan Ayubi<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, School of Public Health, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran. <sup>2</sup>Social Determinants of Health Research Center, Kurdistan University of Medical Sciences, Sanandaj, Iran. <sup>3</sup>Department of Health Education, School of Public Health, Hamadan University of Medical Sciences, Hamadan, Iran. <sup>4</sup>Department of Epidemiology, School of Public Health, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran.

### Dear Editor-in-chief,

It is estimated globally 3.2 million children were living with HIV in 2014, that mostly in sub-Saharan Africa. However, the majority of them infected to HIV from their mothers during pregnancy, during delivery or breastfeeding (1). Antiretroviral therapy (ART) use during and after pregnancy is essential for prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV (2). In the absence of any interventions HIV transmission rates are the range of 15-45% (3). In this letter our goal is to describe the situation of transmission of HIV/AIDS from mother to child in Iran compared other regions of the world, and expressed which indicators should be upgraded.

As shown in **Figure.1**, estimated numbers of infected children in Iran were 1900 (1400 – 2800) in 2015. This situation is much better of many African countries with more than 11,000 infected children. For many countries in Europe, South East Asia and America, this information was not available (4). Regarding coverage of pregnant women who receive antiretroviral therapy (ARV) for PMTCT index, that's mean percentage of infants born to HIV-positive women receiving a virological test for HIV within 2 months of birth (**Figure.2**), Iran is among the countries with less than 36% coverage. However, this indicator for many countries in South Africa, South America and Central Asia is more than 85% (5). Also, early diagnoses of HIV infected infants in Iran not have suitable conditions, and like many countries of North Africa and Southeast Asia less than 36% of them were timely diagnosed (**Figure.3**).

**Key Words:** AIDS, Antiretroviral therapy, Children, HIV, Iran, Prevention.

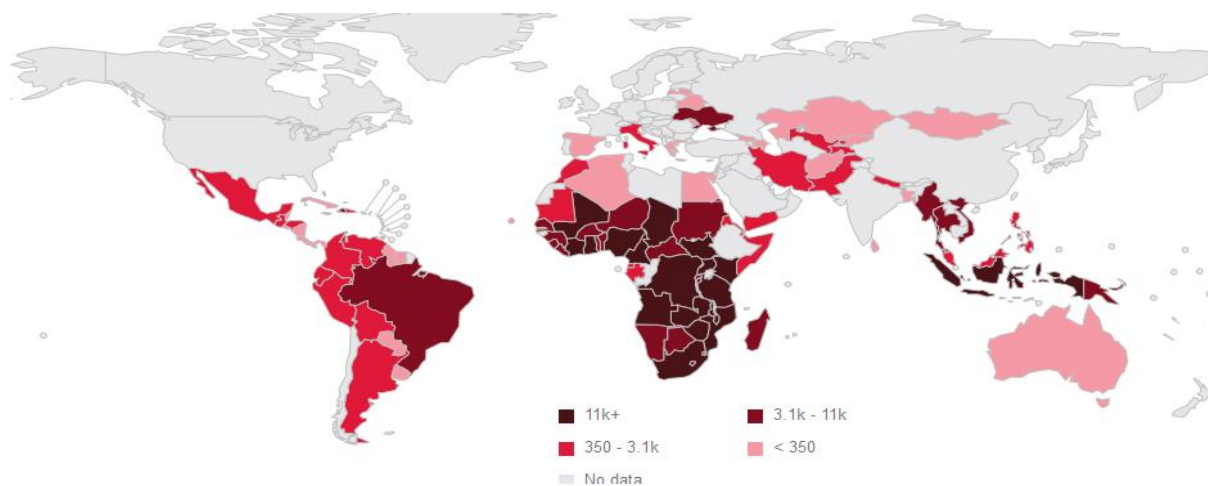
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### \*Corresponding Author:

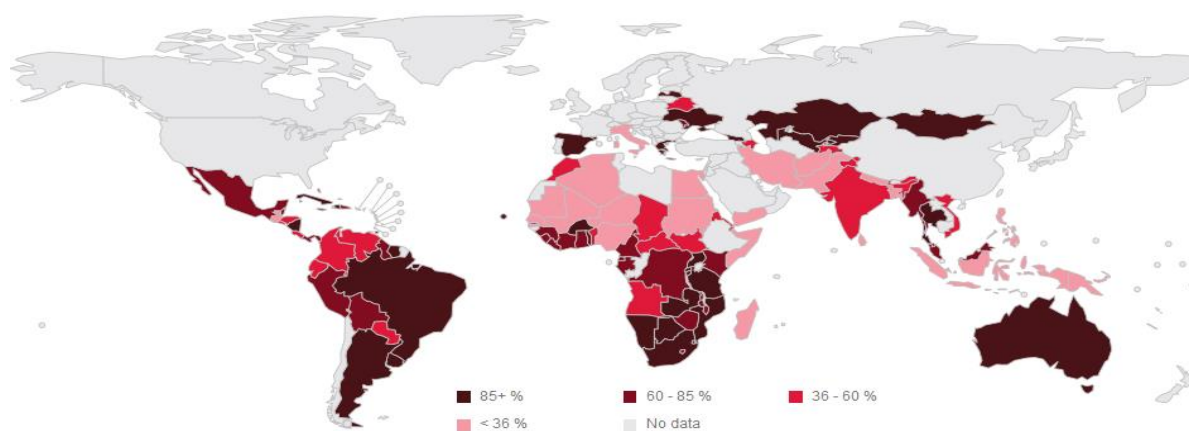
Erfan Ayubi (MSc, PhDc), Department of Epidemiology, School of Public Health, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran

Email: aubi65@gmail.com

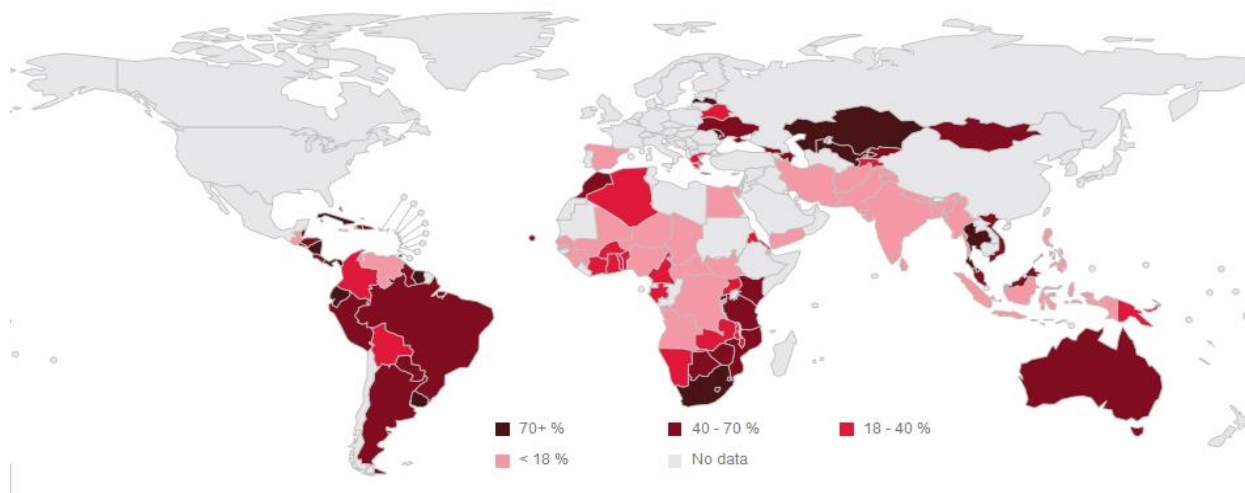
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**Fig.1:** Globally number of children (0-14) living with HIV (Ranged between less than 500 patients to 11,000 patients and more)



**Fig.2:** Globally coverage of pregnant women who receive ARV for PMTCT (Percent)



**Fig.3:** Globally percent of early diagnosis of HIV infection in infants

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, although the process of identifying HIV positive women has seen an increasing trend in recent years, given the poor condition of the above indicators, PMTCT program and access of neonates to virologic testing should intensify in Iran. Prevention of infections in women; family planning and reproductive health for women infected with HIV, healthy childbirth for infected women, and newborn care and treatment for infected newborns as four vital points for the control of HIV/AIDS in children should be considered in mother and child care programs (6).

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