

People left behind:
People who inject drugs

[Link with the pdf, People who inject drugs](#)

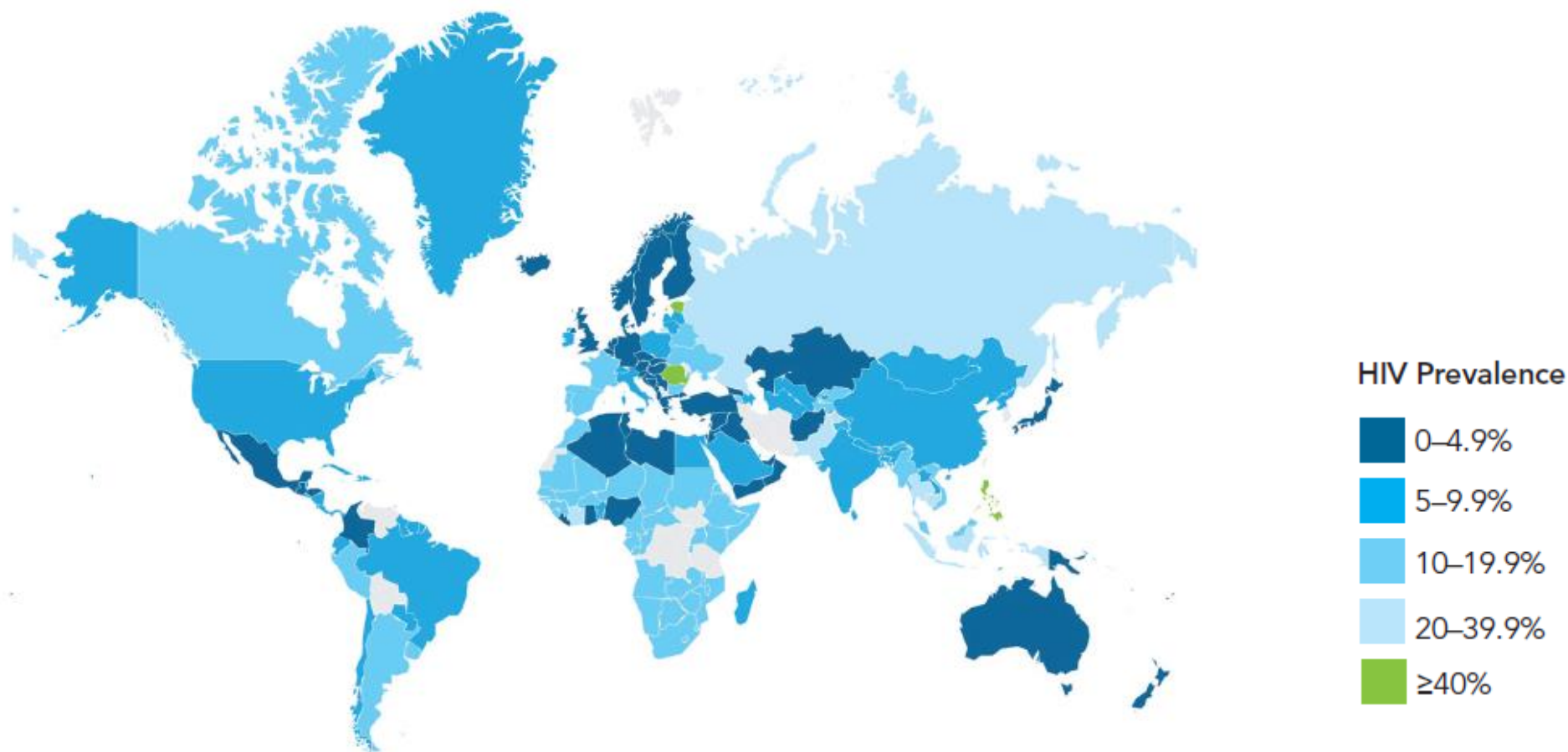


I am an injecting drug user.
I face these issues.

HIV burden

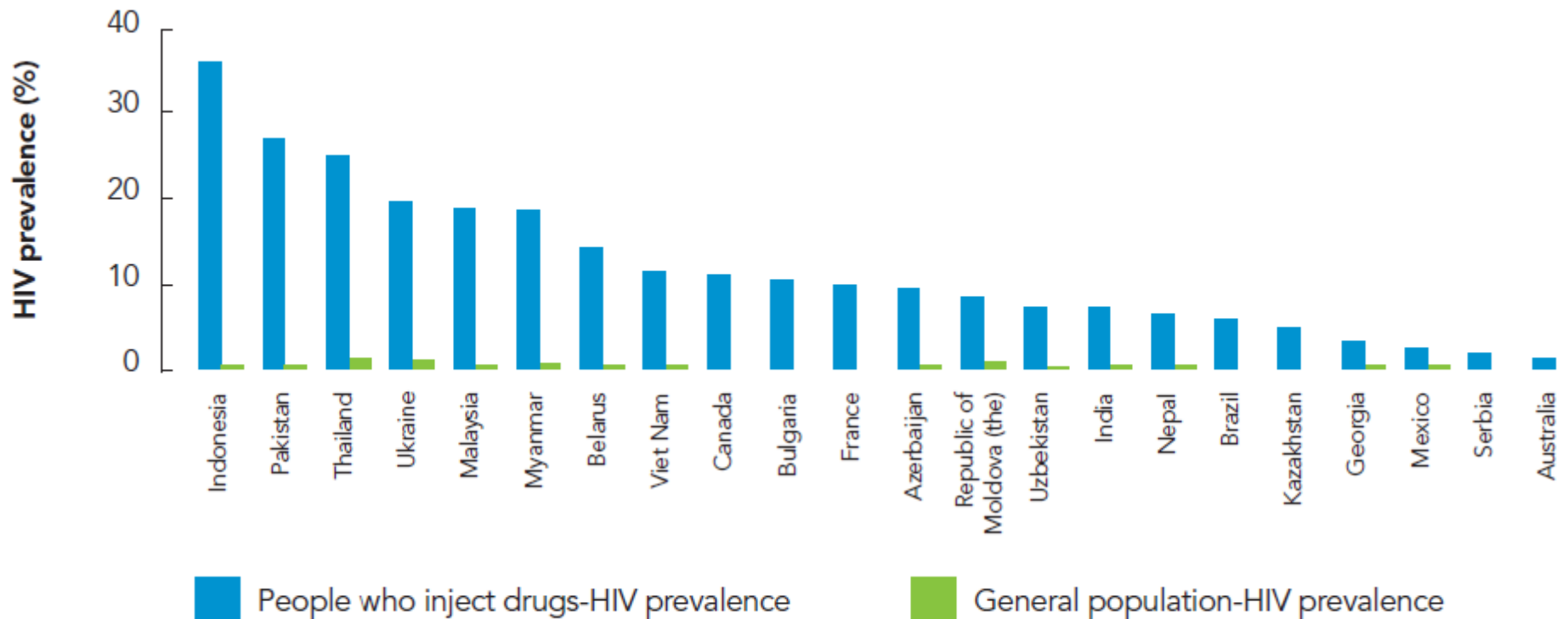
- Injecting drug use is found in nearly every country. It is estimated that worldwide there are nearly 12.7 million people who inject drugs. Approximately 1.7 million, or 13%, are also living with HIV.
- HIV prevalence among people who inject drugs is typically far greater than it is among the rest of the adult population, with people who inject drugs bearing a 28 times higher prevalence.
- People who inject drugs account for 30% of new HIV infections outside sub-Saharan Africa.
- HIV prevalence among young people under 25 years old who inject drugs was 5.2%.
- HIV prevalence appears to be rising in the Asia and the Pacific and in eastern Europe and central Asia.

HIV prevalence among people who inject drugs



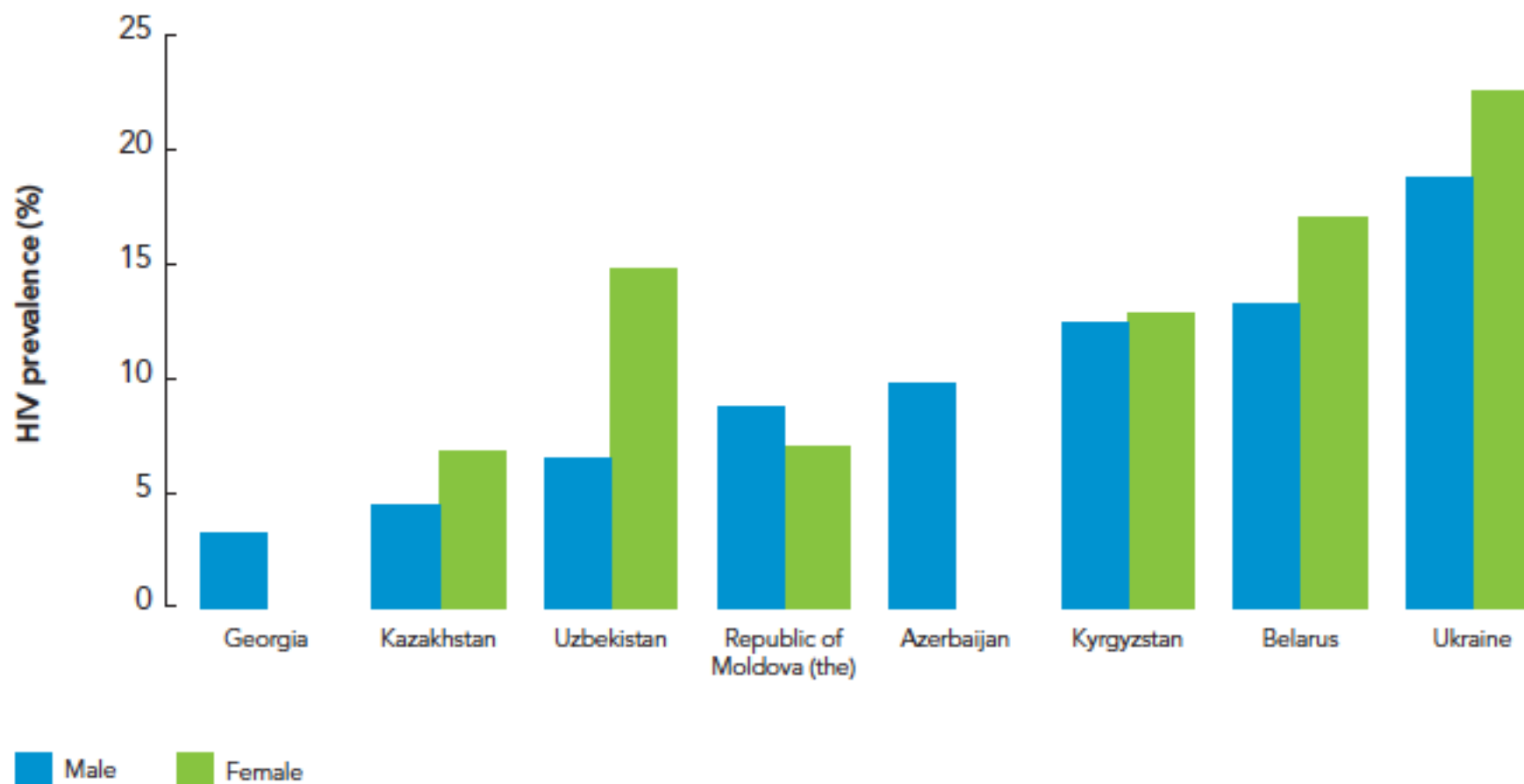
Source: Based on GARPR reporting from 79 countries since 2009, plus the UNODC World Drug Report 2014.

HIV prevalence among people who inject drugs compared to the general population in countries reporting >30 000 people who inject drugs, 2009–2013



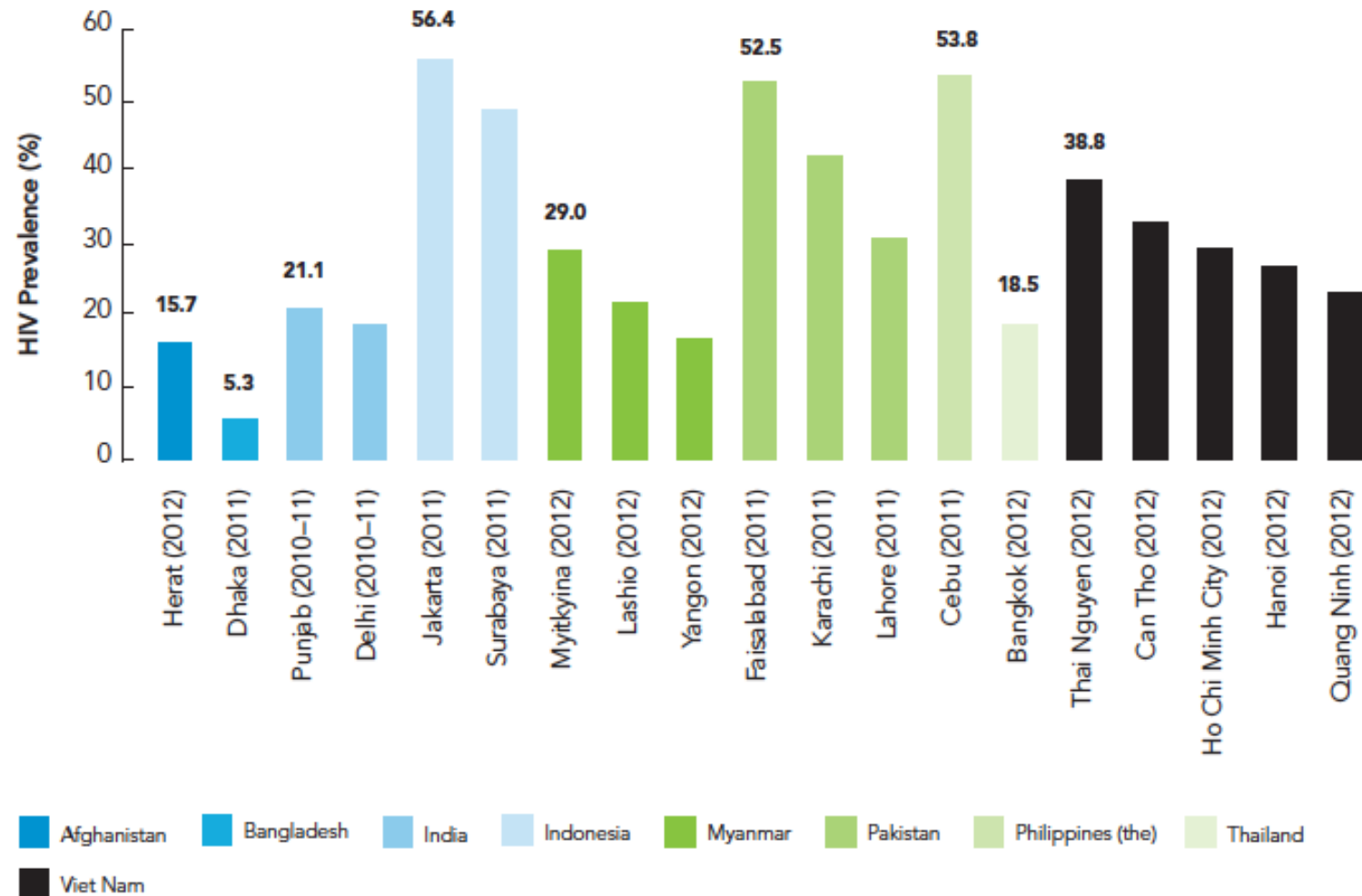
Source: Global AIDS Response Progress Reporting 2014.

HIV prevalence among people who inject drugs in selected countries in eastern Europe and central Asia, 2009-2013



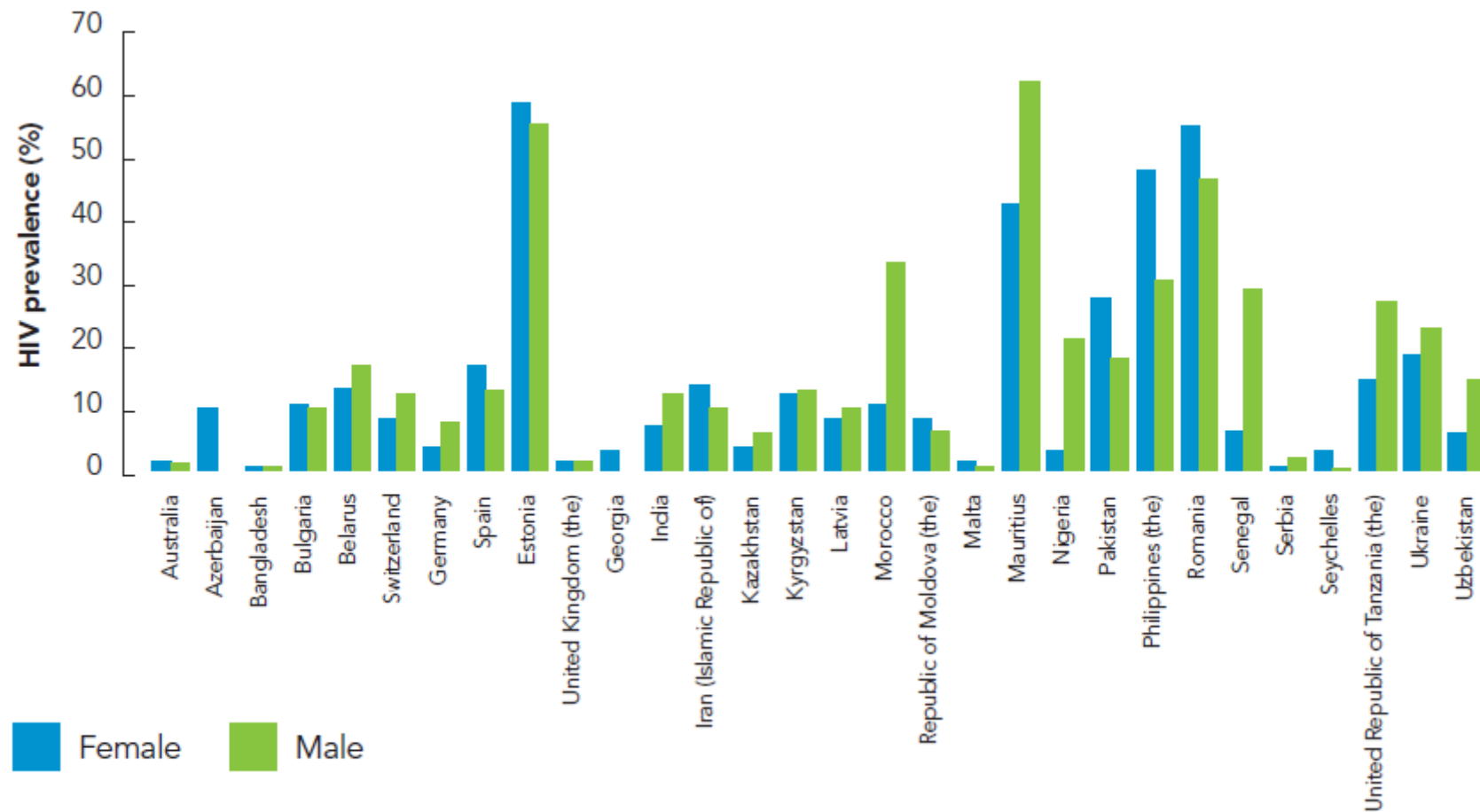
Source: Global AIDS Response Progress Reporting 2014.

HIV prevalence among people who inject drugs in geographical locations which are higher than the national prevalence, 2009–2012



Source: HIV and AIDS Data Hub for Asia Pacific (www.aidsdatahub.org), based on integrated biobehavioural surveys reported in global AIDS response progress reports from 2012, national HIV sentinel surveillance surveys and on data from AIDSinfo Online Database (www.aidsinfoonline.org, accessed on 10 July 2014).

HIV prevalence among people who inject drugs, by sex since 2011



Source: Based on data submitted through GARPR reporting submitted since 2011. Geneva, UNAIDS.

Why people who inject drugs are being left behind

- Typically, when heroin injection reaches a new community, there is an exponential increase in HIV transmission.
- People who inject drugs continue to face punitive legal environments, a variety of human rights abuses and have poor access to services; these and other factors combine to exacerbate their risks of acquiring HIV.
- Among 30 countries reported data on women who inject drugs, the pooled HIV prevalence among women was 13% compared to 9% among men from the same countries.
- Surveys from disparate sites such as Canada, Mauritius and the Republic of Moldova have found high rates of sex work among injecting respondents and high rates of injecting drug use among sex-worker respondents.
- Sex workers who inject drugs often have much higher HIV prevalence than non-injecting sex workers. Transgender women who sell sex and inject drugs are at an even greater risk of acquiring HIV.

WHY PEOPLE WHO INJECT DRUGS ARE BEING LEFT BEHIND

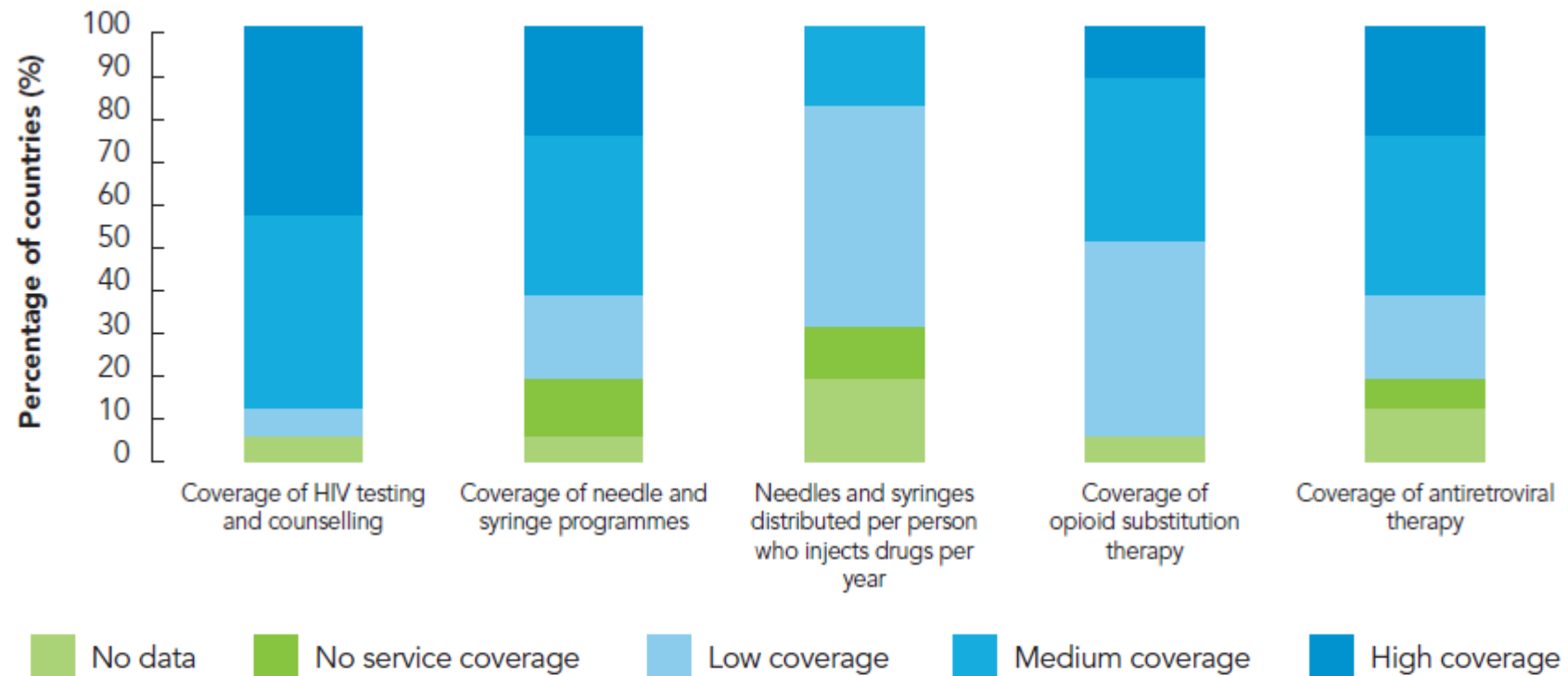
THE TOP 4 REASONS

- 01 Criminalization and punitive laws
- 02 Absent or inadequate prevention services
- 03 Widespread societal stigma
- 04 Lack of investment

Criminalization and punitive laws

- People who inject drugs are almost universally criminalized, either for their drug-use activity or through the lifestyle adopted in order to maintain their drug use. Many are in prison or held in detention at some point in their lives, often for long periods. Estimates suggest that 56–90% of people who inject drugs will be incarcerated at some stage during their life.
- The majority of national drug control policies focus on supply reduction and law enforcement against any drug use, and people who use drugs are often collateral victims of those interventions.
- In various parts of the world, the possession of clean syringes can be used as evidence to prosecute people who inject drugs or provide grounds for police harassment, thereby deterring safe injecting practices.
- Compulsory detention centres and prisons often include forced labour and violence, in contravention of internationally recommended approaches and human rights. Compulsory detention centres remain common in Asia.

Percentage of countries reporting HIV prevention service coverage for people who inject drugs by level of coverage



Source: World drug report 2014. Vienna, UNODC, 2014.

Based on data submitted through GARPR reporting submitted since 2011 (only for the number of needles and syringes distributed per person who injects drugs). Geneva, UNAIDS.

Overview of the level of provision of harm reduction services

	Countries reporting low, medium or high coverage (percentage)			Number of countries reporting	Global median value	Low	Medium	High
	Low	Medium	High			Less than	From-to	More than
Percentage of people who inject drugs who were tested for HIV in the last 12 months and who know the results	31%	29%	40%	83	36% ^a	40%	40–75%	75%
Percentage of all people who inject drugs who were reached by a needle and syringe programme over the last 12 months	49%	25%	26%	85		20%	20–60%	60%
Number of needles and syringes distributed per person who injects drugs per year	62%	20%	18%	55	74	100	100–200	200
Percentage of opioid dependent people who inject drugs on opioid substitution therapy	35%	32%	33%	79		20%	20–40%	40%
Percentage of all HIV positive people who inject drugs receiving antiretroviral therapy at a specified date	32%	31%	37%	74		25%	25–75%	75%

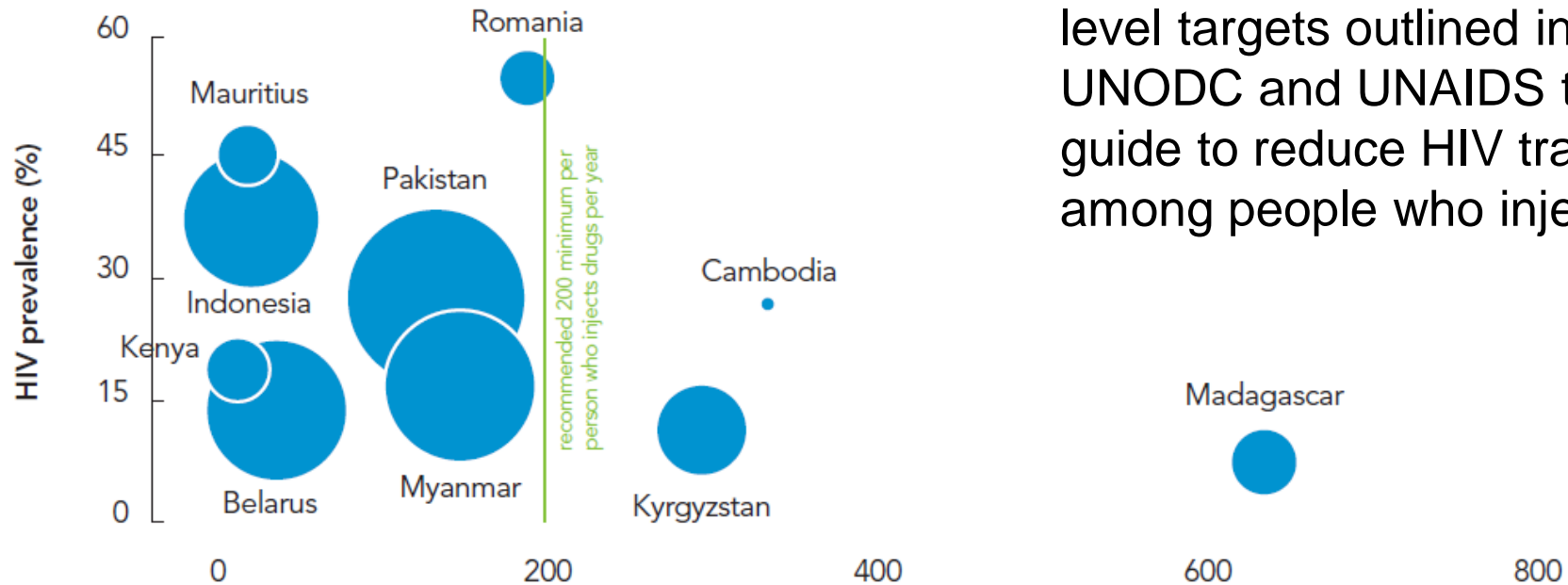
^a Based predominantly on behavioural survey data.

Source: World drug report 2014. Vienna, UNODC (1).



Insufficient availability of needles and syringes, 2011-2013

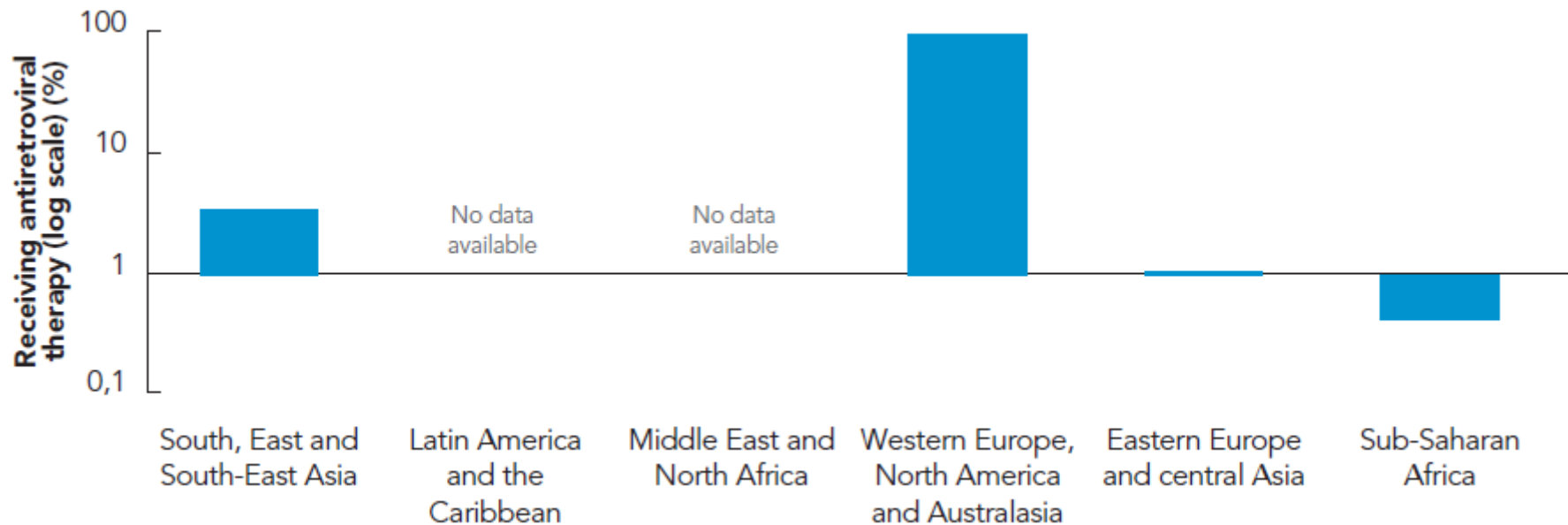
In most countries, HIV service provision for people who inject drugs falls below even the lower-level targets outlined in the WHO, UNODC and UNAIDS technical guide to reduce HIV transmission among people who inject drugs.



Number of needles and syringes distributed per person who injects drugs (per year, needle and syringe exchange programmes)

● ● Relative sizes of the reported populations of people who inject drugs.

Proportion of people who inject drugs living with HIV who receive antiretroviral therapy



The majority of people who use drugs living with HIV do not have access to HIV treatment. A World Bank analysis estimates that about one in ten people who inject drugs and is living with HIV is receiving antiretroviral therapy (**compared to 37% of people living with HIV globally receiving ART**)

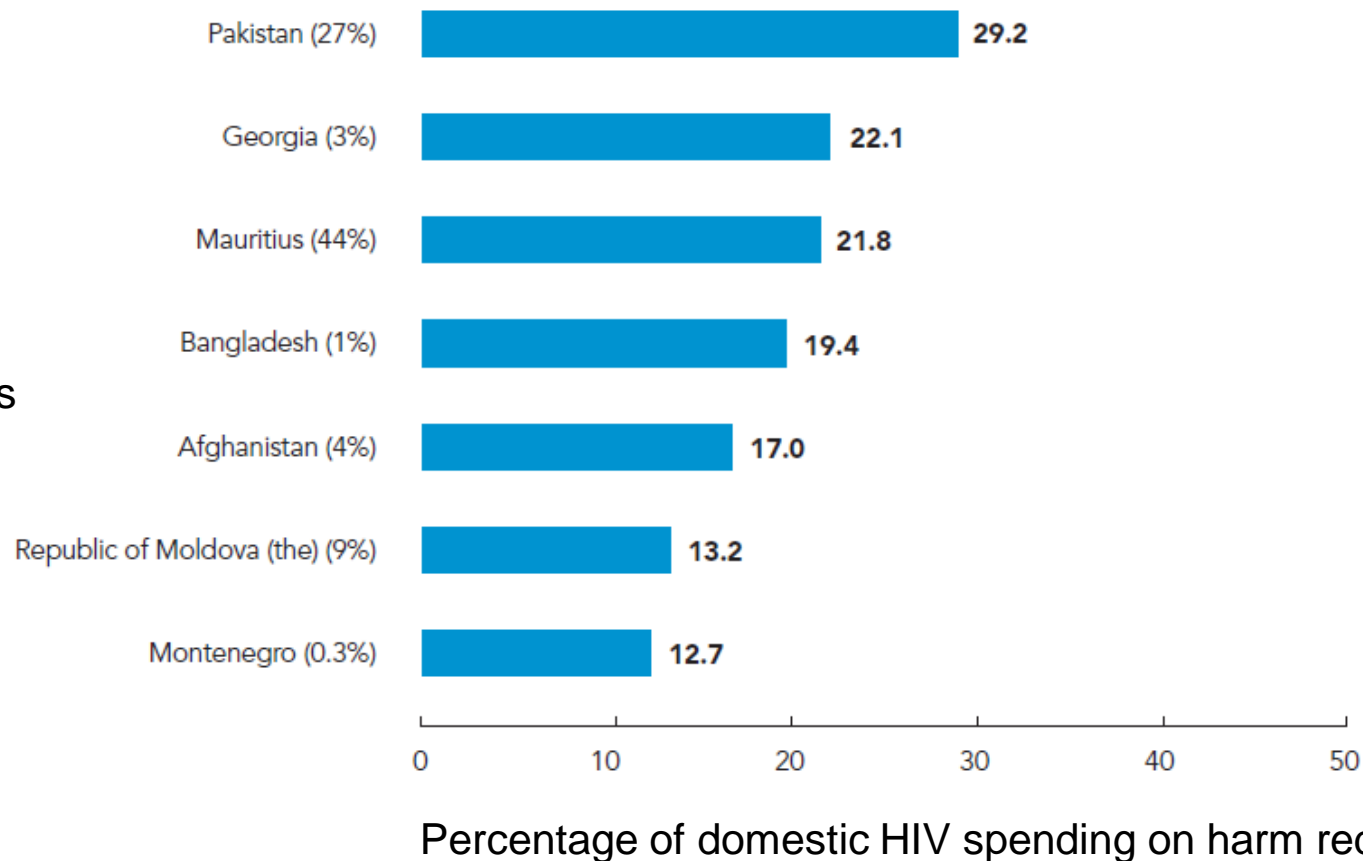
Source: World Bank literature review and estimates, based on Mathers BM, et al. HIV prevention, treatment, and care services for people who inject drugs: a systematic review of global, regional, and national coverage. *Lancet*. 2010;375(9719):1014–1028. doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(10)60232-2.

Widespread societal stigma

- Many governments find it politically unpalatable to provide adequate HIV and health services for people who inject drugs, who are a socially stigmatized and criminalized population.
- People who inject drugs are among the most marginalized and invisible people in all societies.
- Stigma and discrimination in health- and social-care settings also keep people who use drugs away. Health services may even exclude people who inject drugs or treat them badly when they ask for help.
- Evidence indicates that, when women who inject drugs and are living with HIV become pregnant, they face substantial barriers to accessing services to prevent their infants from acquiring HIV infection—even more so than other women who are living with HIV.

Countries reporting >10% of domestic HIV spending on harm reduction, with the HIV prevalence (%) among people who inject drugs

HIV prevalence among people who inject drugs



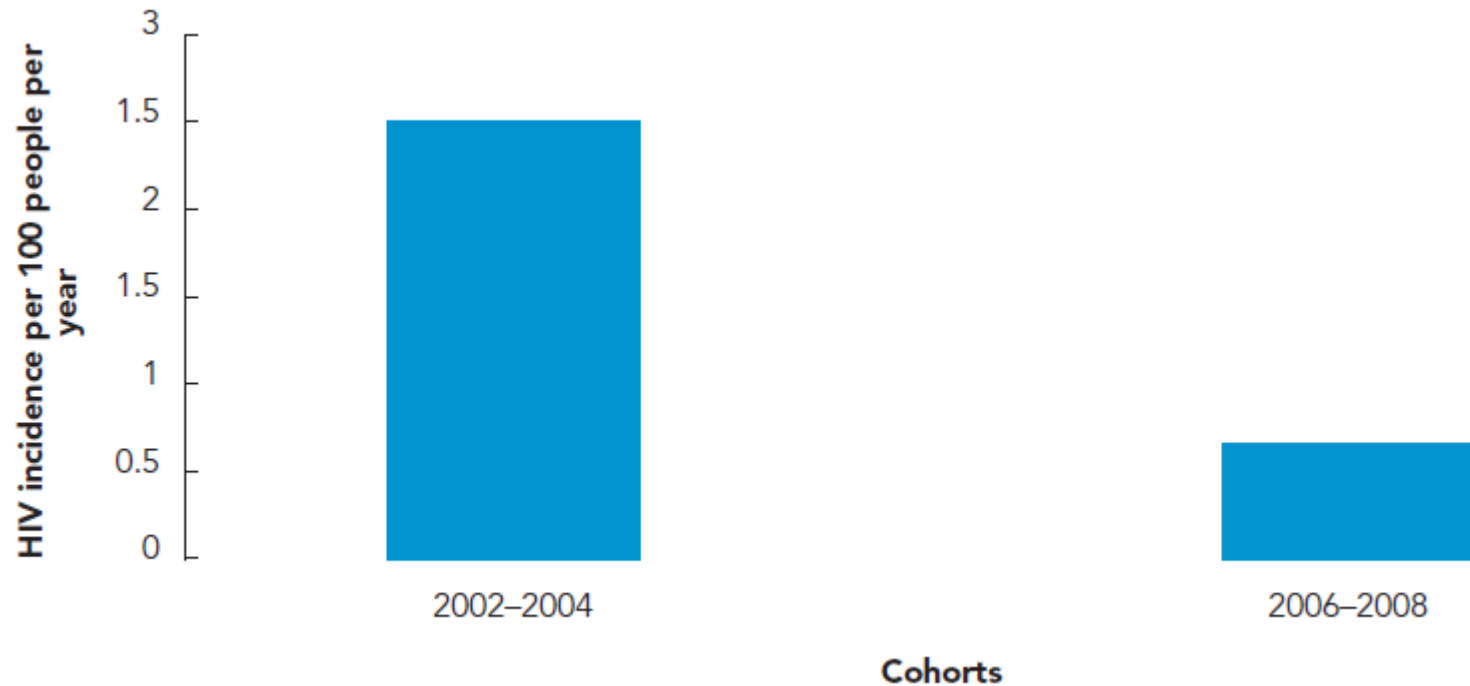
Source: Based on GARPR reporting since 2010. Geneva, UNAIDS.

CLOSING THE GAP

HOW TO CLOSE THE GAP

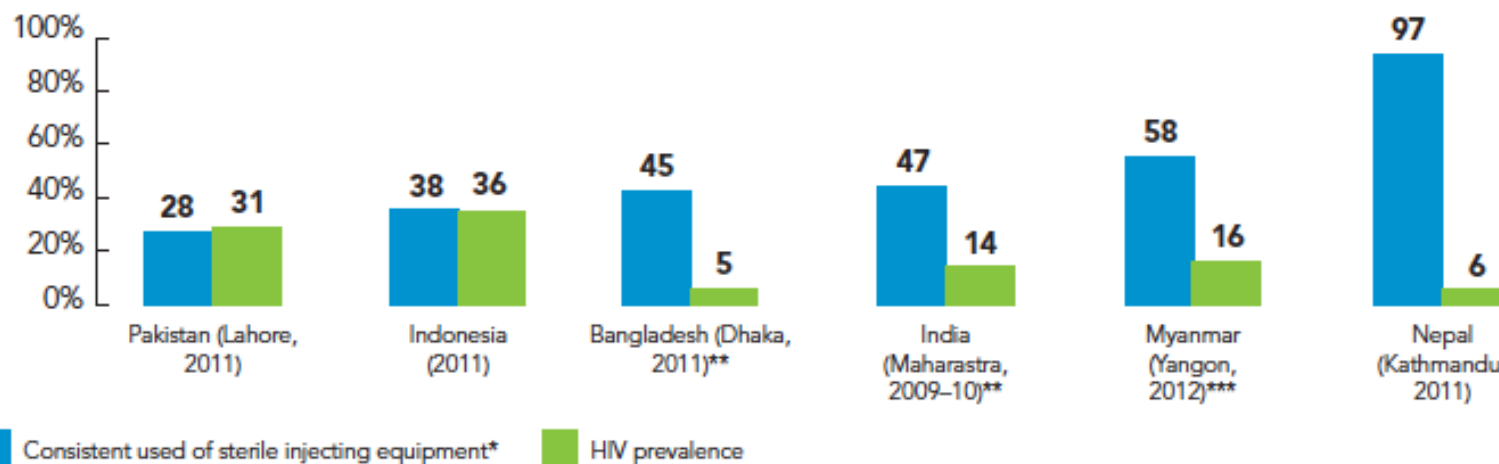
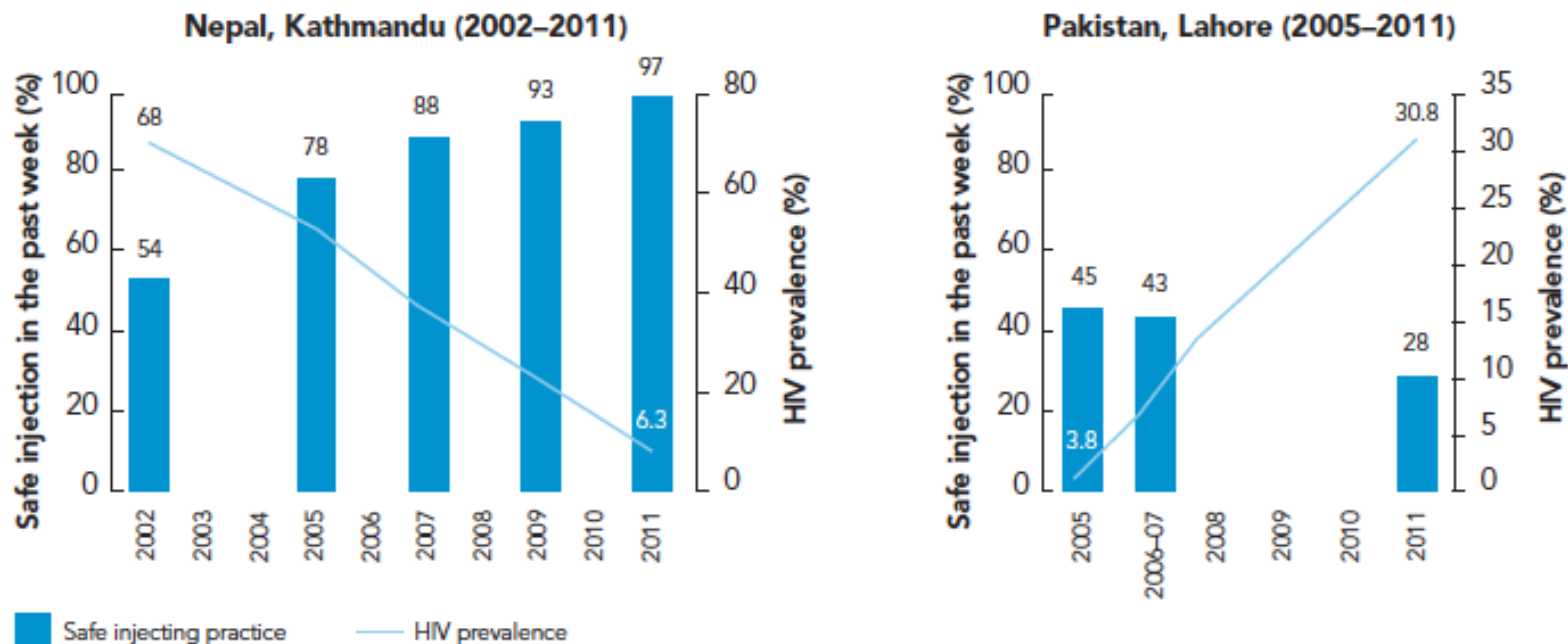
- 01 Transform punitive laws that criminalize the use of drugs
- 02 Expand evidence-informed services
- 03 Address institutionalized stigma and discrimination
- 04 Increase domestic funding for harm reduction programmes

HIV incidence rate among people who inject drugs drops by 75% in one Chinese city with strong harm reduction programmes



Source: Ruan Y, et al. Evaluation of harm reduction programmes on seroincidence of HIV, hepatitis B and C, syphilis among intravenous drug users in southwest China. *Sex Transm Dis.* 2013;40(4):323-328. doi:10.1097/OLQ.0b013e31827fd4d4.

Correlation between safe injecting practices and HIV prevalence among people who inject drugs in selected countries



* Duration of consistent use of sterile injecting equipment varies from last week to last 6 months;

** Behavioral data for 2006–07, never used used-needles and syringes;

*** Behavioral data for 2008

