Tracking development assistance for HIV/AIDS by type of investment, 1990–2015

Joseph L Dieleman, Lavanya Singh, Maxwell Birger, Matthew Schneider, Abigail Chapin

Abstract

Background Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 6 focused on halting the spread of HIV/AIDS. Since this goal was established, more development assistance for health has been devoted to combat HIV/AIDS in low-income and middle-income countries than any other cause of illness. In this study, we aim to track development assistance for the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS at a granular level, assessing the priorities over time for each major donor.

Methods We extracted data from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation’s Financing Global Health 2015 report. This report systematically tracks development assistance for health care from 1990 to 2015, and splits this assistance into more than 20 health focus areas, drawing data from all the main international development agencies working with HIV/AIDS, including all bilateral aid agencies and the US President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief; the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria; the World Bank; the Gates Foundation, and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. We used budget documents and project descriptions to track donors’ priorities and to categorise investments. We report the sources of the funds, primary channels of delivery, and the recipient countries.

Findings Since 2000, US$100·4 billion of development assistance has been provided for HIV/AIDS. In 2014, $10·9 billion was disbursed. Between 2000 and 2010, assistance for HIV/AIDS grew at an annualised rate of 23%. However, since 2010, the annualised rate of growth has been less than 1%. The US Government was the largest source of development assistance for HIV/AIDS during the MDG era, between 2000 and 2015, providing 56% of all funding. The US Government prioritised treatment (40% of its fund in 2014) and prevention (31%), whereas the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria splits its investments between prevention, strengthening of health systems, and treatment. UNAIDS focused more than 60% of its assistance on the strengthening of health systems. Across all recipient countries, an average of $3600 per HIV/AIDS disability-adjusted life-year was disbursed between 2000 and 2014.

Interpretation The scale-up of development assistance for HIV/AIDS has been both remarkable and diverse, with different agencies prioritising different investment strategies. Understanding spending patterns and comparative advantages provides insight into what agencies can contribute as the global AIDS community transitions from the MDGs to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Funding Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Copyright © Dieleman et al. Open Access article distributed under the terms of CC BY.

Declaration of interests We declare no competing interests.