

# Adoption of WHO cryptococcal meningitis recommendations in national guidelines in sub-Saharan Africa

Authors: Sharonann Lynch<sup>1</sup>, Agrata Sharma<sup>1</sup>, Varsha Srivatsan<sup>1</sup>, Braylee Weets<sup>1</sup>, Amanda Banda<sup>1</sup>, Matthew Kavanagh<sup>1</sup>, Janice Lee<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Center for Global Health Policy & Politics, O'Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law and Georgetown School of Health

<sup>2</sup>Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi)

## BACKGROUND

**Cryptococcal Meningitis (CM)**, an opportunistic infection caused by the *Cryptococcus* fungi, accounts for 15% of global HIV-related deaths. Despite progress in biomedical interventions to prevent and manage CM, mortality rates remain high: an estimated **3 in 4 people living with advanced HIV disease with CM died in 2021**. The HIV Policy Lab's Advanced Disease (AHD) Dashboard (<https://www.advancedhiv.org/>) tracks policy alignment between national guidelines and WHO recommendations on CM.

## METHODS

The AHD Dashboard, a collaboration between the Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative and HIV Policy Lab, tracks 13 policy indicators related to AHD and CM in Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) and Western and Central Africa (WCA). The AHD Dashboard compares CM-related national policies with the 2022 WHO *Guidelines for the diagnosis, prevention, and management of cryptococcal disease in adults, adolescents, and children with HIV*.

Policy documents were found via desktop reviews or the HIV Policy Lab ([hivpolicylab.org](http://hivpolicylab.org)).

## RESULTS

### Eastern and Southern Africa

- Relevant guidelines were found for 17 out of 21 countries
- Zambia, Mozambique, and Kenya adopted 11 out of 13 policies
- South Africa, Rwanda, and Malawi adopted only 7 policies
- 16 countries require CD4 testing but only 9 countries have guidelines on testing for people reentering HIV care
- All countries adopted the CrAg test as a screening tool
- Only 4 countries adopted the LAmB-based CM treatment regimen, 7 adopted amphotericin B-based therapy, and 2 recommend fluconazole-based monotherapy.
- Only Mozambique includes LAmB in its Essential Medicines List for CM.

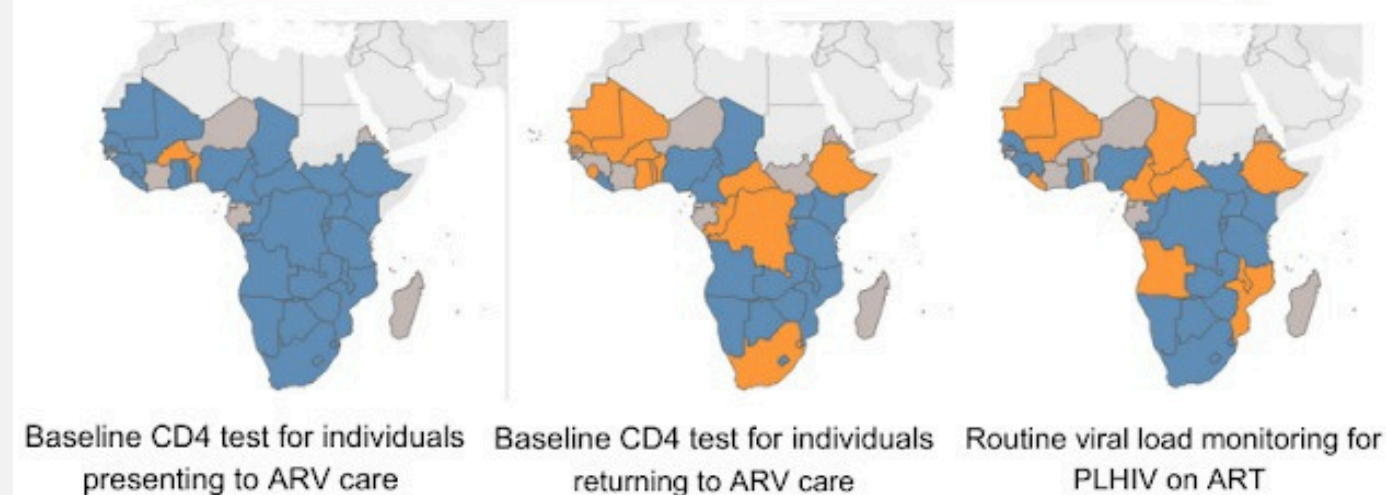
### Western and Central Africa

- Relevant guidelines were found for 18 out of 25 countries.
- 15 countries have adopted baseline CD4 testing for people entering care
- Only 3 countries require CD4 testing for people reentering care
- CrAg screening for all PLWA is only adopted in 7 countries
- Pre-emptive and prophylactic fluconazole therapy is adopted by only 6 and 5 countries, respectively
- 8 countries have adopted lumbar puncture followed by CrAg/ India Ink testing for confirmatory diagnosis of CM
- Only the DRC has adopted the WHO-preferred LAmB induction in its guideline

## CONCLUSION

Countries are increasingly aligning with WHO guidelines for CM. Monitoring and accountability, including by civil society groups, are needed to ensure implementation

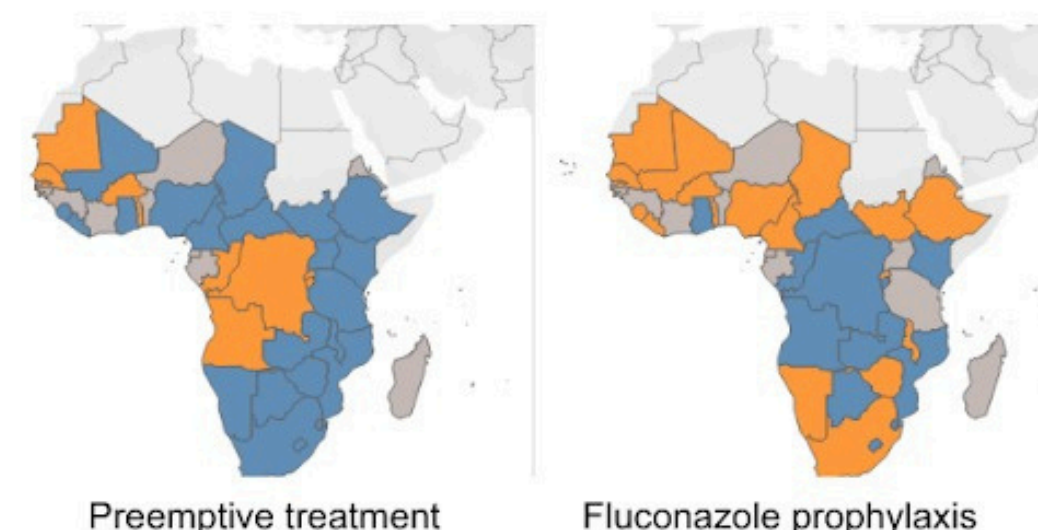
### HIV Monitoring



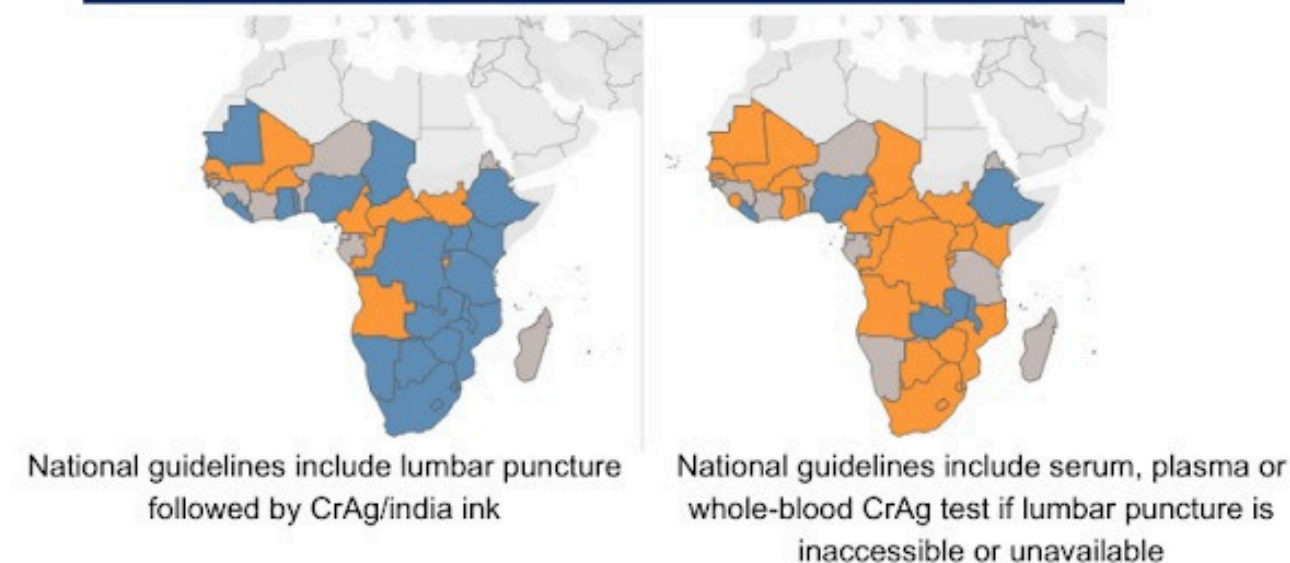
### CM Screening



### CM prevention



### Confirmatory testing



### CM treatment

