

Update on congenital syphilis surveillance in South Africa

Syphilis in infants/children <2 years (congenital syphilis) - has been included on the national Notifiable Medical Conditions (NMC) surveillance platform since July 2017. It is a category 2 NMC- which means all healthcare workers are required to notify cases through paper-based or electronic case notification forms (CNFs) within seven days of diagnosis. In addition to clinical notifications collected via CNFs, data on RPR positive results from infants/children <2 years are obtained from the laboratory information system to monitor maternal syphilis exposure and/or testing. We present an update on clinical notifications and RPR positive results from infants <2 years for the period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2022.

period, there was a general increase in the number of clinical notifications from Q3 2017, peaking in Q2 2020, followed by fluctuating numbers in the remaining quarters. There was a steady increase in the number of RPR positive results from infants/children with fluctuations in Q2 2018, Q4 2018, Q1 2019, Q3 and Q4 2020 as well as Q1 2022 and Q2 2022- Figure 13. Three provinces, Kwazulu-Natal, Gauteng and Western Cape, accounted for 89% of all clinical notifications and 67.9% of RPR positive results suggesting under-notification by facilities in some districts and provinces. There is a need to improve the prevention of, screening and treatment for maternal syphilis as notification of cases should they occur.

In this period, there were 1 370 clinical notifications of CS cases and 18 518 RPR positive results. Notifications were received from 156 facilities in 44 districts in all nine provinces. Over the

More information on syphilis may be found on the NICD website (<https://www.nicd.ac.za/diseases-a-z-index/congenital-syphillis/>).

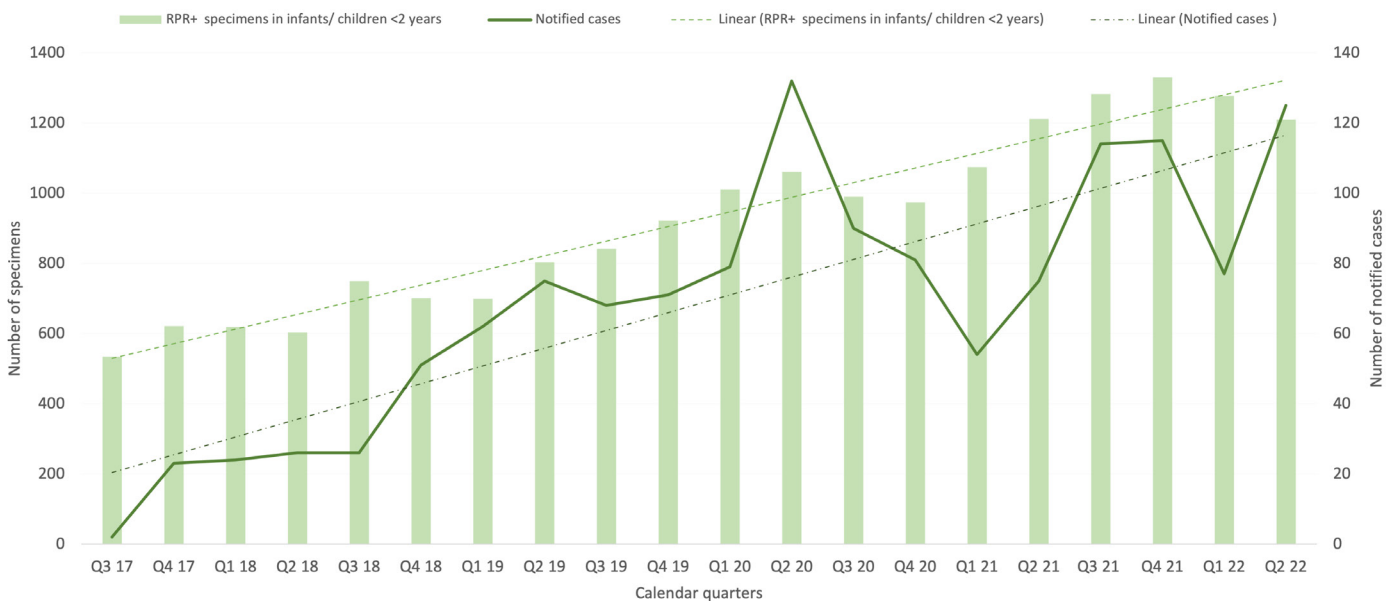


Figure 13. Number of specimens received and number of cases notified per quarter between 2017 and 2022

Source: Centre for HIV and STIs, NICD-NHLS; tendesayik@nicd.ac.za

