

HIV testing services (HTS) among clients 13-14 years old in recent infection surveillance, Malawi 2019-2020

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Background

- Rapid tests for recent infection (RTRIs) are typically used in persons ≥ 15 years old
- Testing persons < 15 years old may include a large proportion of clients who were perinatally infected
- Under a recent infection testing algorithm (RITA), a recent RTRI and viral load (VL) $> 1,000$ copies/mL characterizes persons newly diagnosed with HIV as RITA-recent (< 12 months), otherwise persons are RITA-long-term
- In Malawi, clients ≥ 13 years old can consent to HIV testing and are included in recent infection surveillance

Purpose

- Describe newly diagnosed clients aged 13-14 years old, and their impact on recent HIV surveillance, detection, and response

Methods

- Recent infection data was pooled from 155 facilities in 11 districts from April 2019 to April 2020 (Figure 1)
- **Inclusion Criteria**
 - Newly diagnosed client ≥ 13 years
 - Valid Asante HIV-1 Rapid Recency Assay™ results
- **Exclusion Criteria**
 - Reported prior ART use, prior HIV diagnosis or an initial VL $< 1,000$ copies/mL
- Among 13-14 year olds, proportions of RITA-recent infections were calculated and described by demographics, HTS modality, and prior testing history

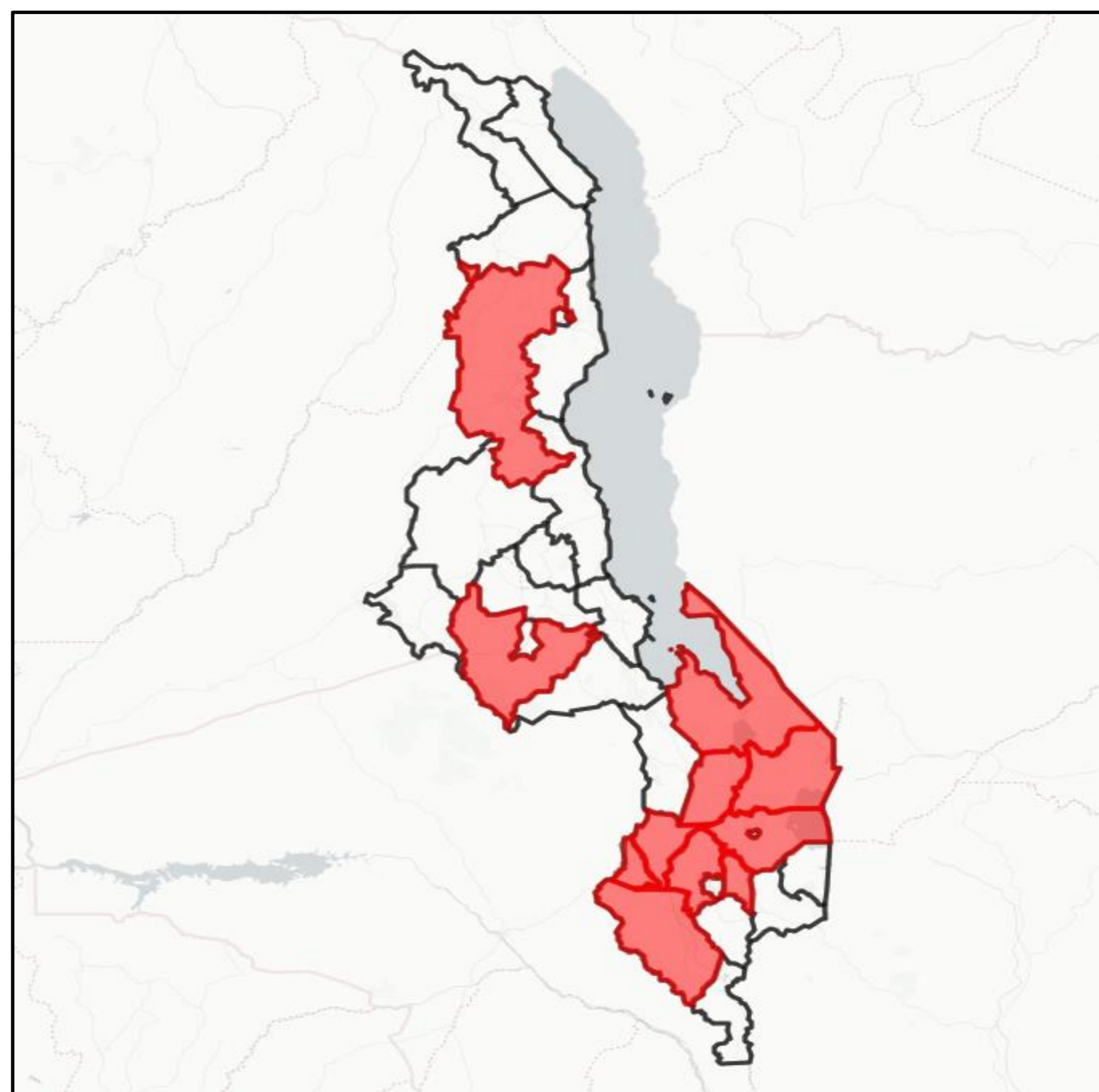


Figure 1. Map of Malawi. Districts included in this analysis are highlighted in red

Table 1. Characteristics of 13-14 year old clients enrolled in Recent Infection Surveillance

Sex	
Male	29 (37.2%)
Female	49 (62.8%)
Pregnant	3 (6.1%)
Breastfeeding	1 (2.0%)
HTS Modality Type	
Voluntary Counseling and Testing	52 (66.7%)
Outpatient Departments	12 (15.4%)
Youth/Pediatric Clinics	4 (5.1%)
Other Facilities	10 (12.8%)
Testing History	
No prior testing history	58 (74.4%)
A negative HIV result in past 1+ years	20 (25.6%)
Facility Location	
Rural	42 (53.8%)
Urban	36 (46.2%)
Facility Type	
Primary	49 (62.8%)
Secondary/Tertiary	29 (37.2%)

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Results

- Of the 15,032 newly diagnosed clients
 - 78 (0.5%) were 13-14 years old
 - 14,954 were ≥ 15 years old
 - 519 (3.5%) were RITA recent infections
- Of the 78 newly diagnosed 13-14 year-olds, 1 (1.3%) was RITA recent which accounted for 0.2% of all 519 RITA recent infections

Conclusion

- Per self-report, newly diagnosed clients aged 13-14 were unlikely to have accessed HIV testing services prior to diagnosis
- Clients aged 13-14 were primarily accessing testing and being diagnosed at primary care facilities
- Proportion of persons aged 13-14 with recent HIV infection is small and unlikely to meaningfully contribute to detection of recent infections and identifications of populations with potential ongoing HIV transmission
- Age of sexual debut and age of testing consent can be considered when deciding whether to include younger age groups in recent infection surveillance
- Younger adolescents who are recently infected, particularly those pregnant and breastfeeding, may face additional vulnerabilities and should be linked to psychosocial support

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