

CALL FOR PAPERS

Deadline: 31 January 2024

This is a call for papers proposing research articles for a supplement of the *Journal of the International AIDS Society (JIAS)*, titled **"The HIV epidemic in eastern Europe and central Asia: challenges and opportunities"**, to be published in conjunction with AIDS 2024, the 25th International AIDS Conference, taking place in Munich, Germany, in July.

The journal invites submissions on the HIV epidemic in eastern Europe and central Asia from across scientific disciplines, including implementation science, epidemiology and social science. While papers reporting original research are especially sought, short reports, reviews and commentaries will be considered for this supplement (see Submissions for further details).

BACKGROUND

The eastern Europe and central Asia (EECA) region faces a unique and complex HIV epidemiology that sets it apart from other regions of the world. Despite having a lower HIV prevalence than central, eastern, southern and western Africa, the EECA epidemic is growing at an alarming rate. According to data from the Global AIDS Update 2022 [1], this region has witnessed the fastest-growing HIV epidemic globally, recording a 48% increase since 2010. These data are particularly concerning when considering that almost all other regions reported a decrease in new acquisitions (except for the Middle East and North Africa region with a 33% increase). As such, the EECA region remains largely behind the 95-95-95 targets, with only 63% of people living with HIV aware of their status, 81% of people who know their HIV-positive status being on treatment, and 94% of people living with HIV on treatment being virally suppressed.

Discrimination and stigmatization of people living with HIV and key populations, together with the existence of punitive laws, deter people from seeking testing, treatment and support, posing further challenges in the response to the epidemic. Additionally, political developments in the region, such as the war in Ukraine, have led to increased health needs and disruptions of life-saving health services. These include services provided to people living with and most vulnerable to HIV acquisition. As of July 2023, more than 6.2 million refugees from Ukraine have been recorded globally [2].

With AIDS 2024 putting a specific emphasis on EECA, the supplement will focus on the characteristics of the HIV epidemic and unique challenges faced in this region. The goal of the supplement will be to provide recommendations for best practices and culturally relevant implementation strategies to ensure access to HIV prevention and treatment services for vulnerable populations.

SUBMISSIONS

The scope of this call for papers is focused on the HIV epidemic in eastern Europe and central Asia, and we strongly encourage submissions from researchers in low- and middle-income countries. Research, short report, review and Commentary contributions will be considered. Data disaggregation by sex, gender and age is advised in accordance with JIAS standards. Submissions may include research conducted in any setting within the EECA region (for example, geographic location, population, age, health sector), encompassing but not limited to:

- HIV and co-infections (including tuberculosis and hepatitis) and co-morbidities
- Access to HIV prevention, including pre-exposure prophylaxis, testing and treatment services, with particular focus on key and vulnerable populations: men who have sex with men, trans and non-binary people, people who use drugs, sex workers, people in prisons and other closed settings, and displaced populations
- Impact of government policies and human rights restrictions on key populations and their access to HIV care services
- Service interruptions due to conflicts in the region
- Innovative HIV services delivery models in conflict settings

ARTICLE SUBMISSION PROCESS

- Initial contributions should be in the form of **full manuscripts**, written in English, and specifying the proposed category (research, short report, review, commentary). Manuscripts must conform to the journal style and format for each manuscript category. Authors must adhere to the basic specifications, including word counts, as stipulated in the [Author Guidelines](#).
- Authors are welcome to make initial enquiries about potential submissions by emailing supplement@jiasociety.org.
- Initial contributions should be emailed to the Editorial Office as an attachment in Word or PDF format (including figures, tables and additional files) to supplement@jiasociety.org with the subject line, "JIAS supplement: HIV epidemic in eastern Europe and central Asia".
- The deadline for submission of full manuscripts to the Editorial Office is **31 January 2024**.

ARTICLE SELECTION PROCESS

- The Guest Editors will assess all initial contributions.
- All manuscript submitters will be notified about the outcome of their initial submissions for the supplement by **7 February 2024**.
- Selected authors will be invited to formally submit their manuscripts to JIAS for further consideration.
- The deadline for the submission of full manuscripts to JIAS for selected articles is **13 February 2024**. Only manuscripts invited by the Guest Editors will be considered for inclusion in the supplement.
- Invitation and submission do not guarantee acceptance for publication.
- Each invited manuscript will undergo editorial appraisal and peer review based on its individual merits. Only articles that are accepted after peer review will be published in the supplement. Manuscripts that do not meet the journal's standards will be rejected.
- The journal holds supplements to the same standards as other issues. Specifically, all manuscripts under consideration for inclusion in a supplement must adhere to the journal's standards on overall quality, types of articles and types of content within the articles.

IMPORTANT DATES

31 January 2024: Call for papers submission deadline

7 February 2024: Authors notified of the outcome of their initial submission

13 February 2024: Submission of invited manuscripts via the JIAS web portal

July 2024: Publication and launch of the supplement at AIDS 2024, the 25th International AIDS Conference

REFERENCES

1. In Danger: UNAIDS Global AIDS Update 2022 https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/2022-global-aids-update_en.pdf
2. UNHCR. Ukraine emergency factsheet. 2023 [Ukraine Refugee Crisis: Aid, Statistics and News | USA for UNHCR \(unrefugees.org\)](https://www.unrefugees.org/ukraine-refugee-crisis-aid-statistics-and-news-usa/)