Changes in the notification of HIV diagnoses during the COVID-19 pandemic in Peru

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We report a decline in the reporting of HIV diagnoses in Peru throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2020, 5170 HIV diagnoses were reported in Peru, representing a 33% decrease in the average number of HIV diagnoses between 2017 and 2019 (n=7746). At a regional level, the median number of HIV diagnoses reported in 2017–2019 was 139 (IQR 77–311) and in 2020 was 114 (IQR 60–157) (p≤0.001). Twenty-one of 25 regions reported a decrease in HIV diagnoses in 2020 compared with 2017–2019. Regions in the north of Peru showed the largest decrease in the number of HIV diagnoses (figure 1).

While a true decrease in HIV transmission is possible due to social distancing measures, the limitations COVID-19 has placed on healthcare systems may have worsened existing issues with testing in Peru, further delaying HIV diagnosis and treatment. Public health interventions should shield timely HIV testing and early ART initiation during crises in Peru.

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# REFERENCES