

Global R&D Funding for HIV and STIs: The Need for Centering LMIC Accessibility in Funding Efforts

Alison Footman, PhD, MPH¹, Cécile Ventola, PhD²
¹AVAC; ²Impact Global Health

Background

- Funding for HIV and STIs research and development (R&D) is crucial in ending these epidemics, globally
- Robust HIV funding along with advocacy efforts has led to the development of new products to better prevent and treat infections.
- At the same time, STI prevention and treatment options and funding have remained limited.
- It is critical to examine HIV and STI R&D funding trends to identify both gaps and opportunities to end these epidemics.

Methods

- The G-FINDER survey is conducted by Impact Global Health and collects global R&D funding data every year for several global health areas, including HIV and STIs through datamining and surveying funders and industry stakeholders.
- Funding data for drugs, biologics, diagnostics, vaccines, and microbicides were collected.
- Funding trends from 2018 to 2023 were compared for HIV and STI R&D.

Results

- In 2023, a total of \$1,269m and \$218m was dedicated to HIV and STI R&D, respectively.
- While HIV R&D funding decreased, there were several pipeline developments showing the success of coordinated efforts and sustained funding for products, including lenacapavir.
- The majority of STI funding was dedicated to biologics (\$58m) and vaccines (\$84m) for gonorrhea and HSV-2.
- Investments in STI diagnostics, particularly needed in resource limited settings, have decreased by 31% (\$6.8m), from \$22m to \$15m between 2018 and 2023 .
- Public funders have been major stakeholders for diagnostics, contributing 77% of all investments between 2018 and 2023.
- The majority of public funding was dedicated to early-stage research, with probable delays before the products can reach markets.
- Industry involvement has been growing since 2021 but remains limited.

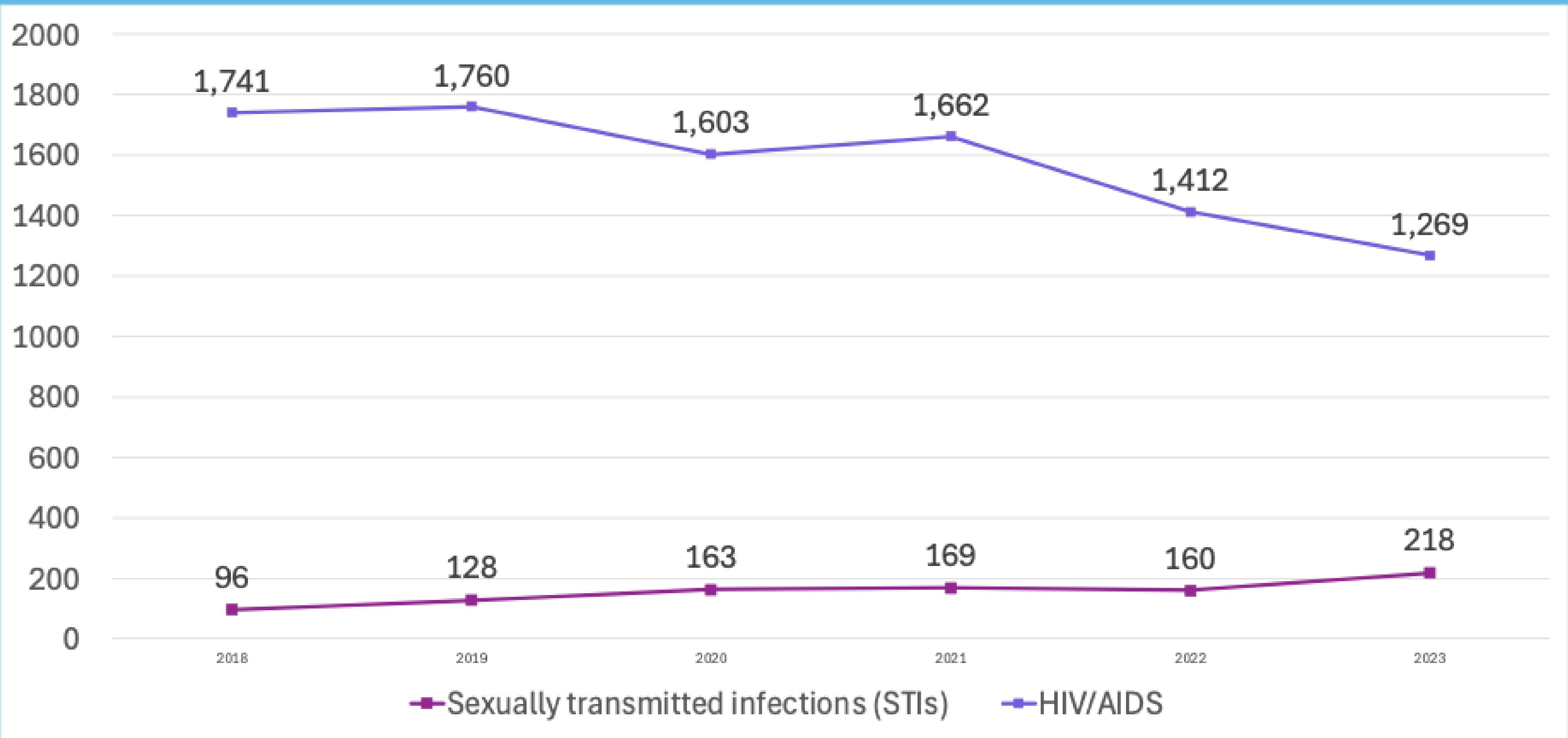


Figure 1. Global funding for STIs and HIV R&D (\$m)

Between 2018 and 2023, global R&D funding for STIs increased, from \$96m to \$218m, a 127% growth. Global R&D funding for HIV dropped from \$1,741m to \$1,269m, a 27% decline. We must continue to invest in both HIV and STI R&D to end these epidemics.

Results

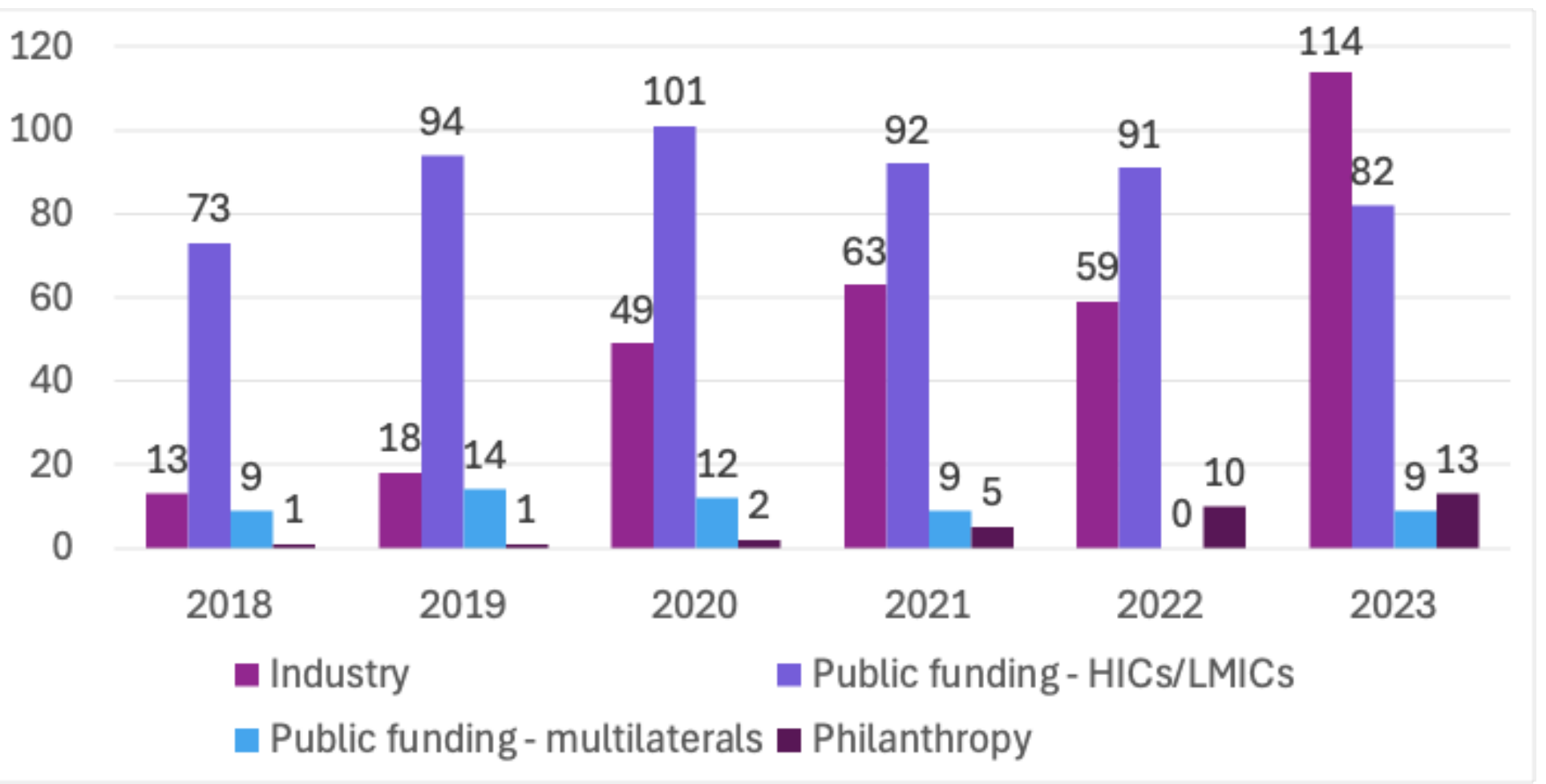


Figure 2. Global STI R&D funding by sector (\$m)

Conclusion

- The increase in biologics and vaccines for gonorrhea and HSV-2 reflects the dual market for specific STIs, for which a high return on investment can be expected in high income countries: gonorrhea is becoming resistant to nearly all treatments currently available and there is no cure available for HSV-2.
- While increased investment in STIs R&D can have global benefits, with potential spillovers for products initially developed with HIC markets in mind, this industry-led growth does not necessarily cater to LMIC-specific unmet needs.
- Current trends in global funding for STIs R&D highlight a potential disconnect between the major drivers of investment and the needs of resource limited settings, including affordable diagnostics.
- Renewed efforts from public stakeholders, as well as incentives for industry sponsors to invest in resource limited appropriate clinical development are needed.

Advocacy Needs

- There is a need to better align STI R&D with global health priorities including investments in STI research focused on targets and outcomes relevant for resource limited settings.
Action: Continue to track and hold accountable public and private funders for equitable investment.
- Affordable, efficient, and reliable diagnostics are desperately needed, especially for limited resource settings
Action: Advocating for public-private partnerships along with pooled procurement mechanisms for affordable STI diagnostics could help to expand access to new tests.
- Continue to raise awareness about the impacts of STIs on health so that funders understand your needs to better prevent, detect, and treat STIs.

STIWatch

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