

Greece

Country statistics

The population of the country was 10,816,286¹⁴.

The HIV prevalence was 6% in 2018 while HBV prevalence was around 2.5-3%, and HCV prevalence around 1.5-2%, according to the Greek national CDC.

There are approx. 600 TB cases reported each year.

The estimated number of high-risk drug users is around 16,500 according to EKTEPN.

4.7% of the general population are depressed¹⁵.

There were 1,586 reported cases of STIs in the period of 2012-2016, according to the national CDC.

Access in the general population

The public has access to condoms, lubricants; PrEP and PEP are also available. NSP and OST are available for people who use drugs and so is Naloxone. There is vaccination for HAV/HBV. Disinfectants and also information leaflets and posters regarding prevention are accessible for the public.

In Greece treatment for HIV, HBV, HCV, and TB are available.

Definition of closed setting – closed settings relevant in the national context

In Greece the definition of 'detention' from the handbook of UNHCR¹⁶ is used. "It is the deprivation of liberty or the confinement in a confined space, where the asylum seeker cannot depart at will. In this context are included prisons and centres or facilities of detention as well as closed reception centres."

In Greece closed settings include prisons; pre-trial detention; police custody (after arrest); centres for refugees and migrants; and pre-deportation centres (ΠΡΟΚΕΚΑ)

Difference of prevalence in closed settings vs general population

There is no data available for prevalence in closed settings.

Funding for prevention and health interventions in closed settings

Prisons, police custody, and pre-trial detention facilities are under the authority of the Ministry of Public Order (citizen's protection in Greek) and the ministry is responsible for the funding of health interventions from its budget.

Pre-deportation centres for migrants/asylum seekers are also under the authority of the Ministry of Public Order.

Centres for refugees and migrants were under the Ministry of Migration until July 2019 when it was taken over by the Ministry of Public Order for the period of July-December 2019. From January 2020 the Ministry of Migration is in charge again. They are using bilateral agreements (contracts) with non-governmental organizations for the provision of health interventions.

Prison statistics

According to the data released monthly by the Ministry of Justice there are places for 9,935 prisoners in Greece and on the 31st of October 2019 there were 10,495 people detained in prisons and there were 206 people detained in the main psychiatric prison in Greece.

The last research on suicide rate in prisons was carried out covering the period 1977 - 2000 and the rate was identified at 110.1 per 100.000 detained people. It is worth mentioning that the rate outside of the prisons at the same period was 3.68 per 100.000. Two thirds of the victims took out their life in pre-trial settings and one third of the victims did that in the main psychiatric prison.

Access and policies vs practice in prisons

People in prison have limited access to prevention tools and methods compared to the general population. There is access to PEP, OST and vaccination for HBV but other tools for preventing HIV or HCV infections is not accessible or available in prisons in Greece. Information leaflets on prevention are also accessible.

When it comes to treatment, HIV, HBV and TB are covered but HCV not in prisons.

Testing and screening are done on an opt-in basis; there is no difference between policies and practice.

Other issues in prisons

PLHIV are detained separated from other detainees. They are in Agios Pavlos prison hospital.

TB patients are also detained in hospitals outside prisons.

HIV and viral hepatitis specialists visit patients in the prison hospitals. TB specialist also visit prisons but if there is a need for treatment, the patient is transported to the relevant hospital where they can receive the treatment.

Trans individuals are detained according to the sex they have in their ID or other official document. There is no access to hormonal therapy.

Training on HIV is not officially available for prison staff. NGOs sometimes provide seminars for staff in prisons.

Confidentiality in the case of PLHIV is non-existent as they are all detained in a certain ward of the prison hospital, so everybody knows they are living with HIV.

PLHIV have officially access to social services and medical support.

Peer support and psychological support are offered by some NGOs for PLHIV. During these sessions that some NGOs have on a weekly or monthly basis with PLHIV they also provide support with leaflets and information for those who have or had also HCV.

Pre-trial detention statistics

The size of population in pre-trial detention was 1,447 (November 2019)

There is no data available on prevalence of communicable diseases or mental illnesses in pre-trial detention in Greece.

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Access and policies vs practice in pre-trial detention

Testing and screening are offered on an opt-in basis, there is no difference between policies and practice. HIV, HBV, HCV testing in practice are provided 'when and if necessary'. TB screening is provided if the person has cough symptoms. This information was provided by the prisoners themselves as the prison administration did not provide an official reply to this inquiry.

In pre-trial detention, detainees have access to OST and disinfectants as prevention methods, and information leaflets and posters are accessible.

In pre-trial detention treatment for HIV and TB are available.

Other issues in pre-trial detention

Regardless of the detainees' detention status, they are always transported to the prison hospital if they are living with HIV.

Hepatitis patients are detained together with others while TB patients are transported to hospitals for the period of being infectious.

Specialist doctors for all 3 communicable diseases visit patients in pre-trial detention or the prison ward of the hospitals

Trans individuals are detained according to the sex indicated in their ID or other official document, there is no access to hormonal therapy.

There is no information on STIs.

Police custody statistics

There is no official data available on police custody.

Access and policies vs practice in police custody

There are no testing policies in police custody settings and there is only access to disinfectants (e.g. for hands). There is no information available on the availability of treatment for any diseases or conditions, which is problematic for the continuity of treatment in police custody.

Other issues in police custody

In police custody NGOs provide psychosocial and rarely legal support.

Centres for refugees and migrants statistics

The size of population in centres for refugees and migrants in Greece is 35,000. There is no data available for prevalence on communicable diseases, mental health issues, or suicide rate.

Access in centres for refugees and migrants and policies vs practice in centres for refugees and migrants

Testing in these centres are offered on an opt-in basis. Access to PEP is provided. There are no other means of prevention or provision of treatment in these settings.

Other issues in centres for refugees and migrants

PLHIV and people with viral hepatitis are together with other people in these facilities. In best case, they are transferred to the mainland to be linked to treatment and care in relevant hospitals.

There are no specialist doctors in these centres but general physicians.

Until recently trans individuals and non-binary people were considered as vulnerable cases and they were transported in safer spaces in the mainland. There is no hormonal therapy provided in the centres.

There is no training on HIV available for the staff of the centres for refugees and migrants.

In some cases NGOs provide psychological, social and legal services for people in the centres.

Centres for refugees and migrants are not exactly considered closed settings. In Greece in the islands of east Aegean Sea, people have to register upon arrival and apply for asylum and then he/she is free to go in and out of the camp but must not leave the island.

Young people

Young people are detained in youth prisons in Greece. Apart from youth prisons recently being highly overcrowded in comparison to adults' prisons, there are no particular differences concerning access to different health services as explored in the case of adults.