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The long road to universal antiretroviral treatment coverage in South Africa

CITATION

Wouters E, Heunis C, Michielsen J, Van Loon FB & Meulemans H. 2011. The long road to universal antiretroviral treatment coverage in South Africa. *Future Virology*, 6(7): 801-812. DOI: 10.2217/fvl.11.5

ABSTRACT

In order to sustainably scale-up antiretroviral treatment (ART), South Africa needs to develop an efficient and effective implementation strategy, based on the best available scientific evidence. This article aims to bridge this knowledge gap first by describing the progress South Africa has made in the fight against HIV/AIDS in terms of virological efficacy, survival rates and retention in care, and second by identifying the potential remaining impediments to a durable and sustainable policy response to the epidemic. The study findings demonstrate that, despite favorable results in terms of virologic suppression, survival/mortality and retention in care, four challenges to a sustainable ART scale-up remain: first, the lack of integration of ART services into the general health system; second, the growing need for comprehensive HIV/AIDS care; third, the rising costs associated with the growing case load of people; and fourth, the crippling shortage in human resources for healthcare.