

HIV and syphilis testing at antenatal care in Lubumbashi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo: insights from public and private facilities

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Background & objective

- During pregnancy, untreated HIV and syphilis can lead to vertical transmission and adverse maternal and perinatal outcomes
- Antenatal care (ANC) offers a platform to routinely offer HIV and syphilis testing, yet little is known on **integration of HIV and syphilis testing in ANC** in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)
- Objective:** to describe the delivery of HIV and syphilis testing services through ANC in Lubumbashi, the second largest city in DRC

Methods

- Study period: July 29 – December 1, 2024 (18 weeks)
- Study design: prospective longitudinal
- Study sample:
 - 187 of the largest **maternal healthcare facilities offering childbirth care**
 - Located across all 11 health zones in Lubumbashi
- Data collection: weekly extraction from facility registers:
 - Number of ANC visits, HIV tests recorded, syphilis tests recorded
- Key outcome: **testing coverage**
 - Defined as the **percentage of ANC visits that included**
 - HIV testing**
 - Syphilis testing**
 - Coverage described by facility sector, facility level, health zone

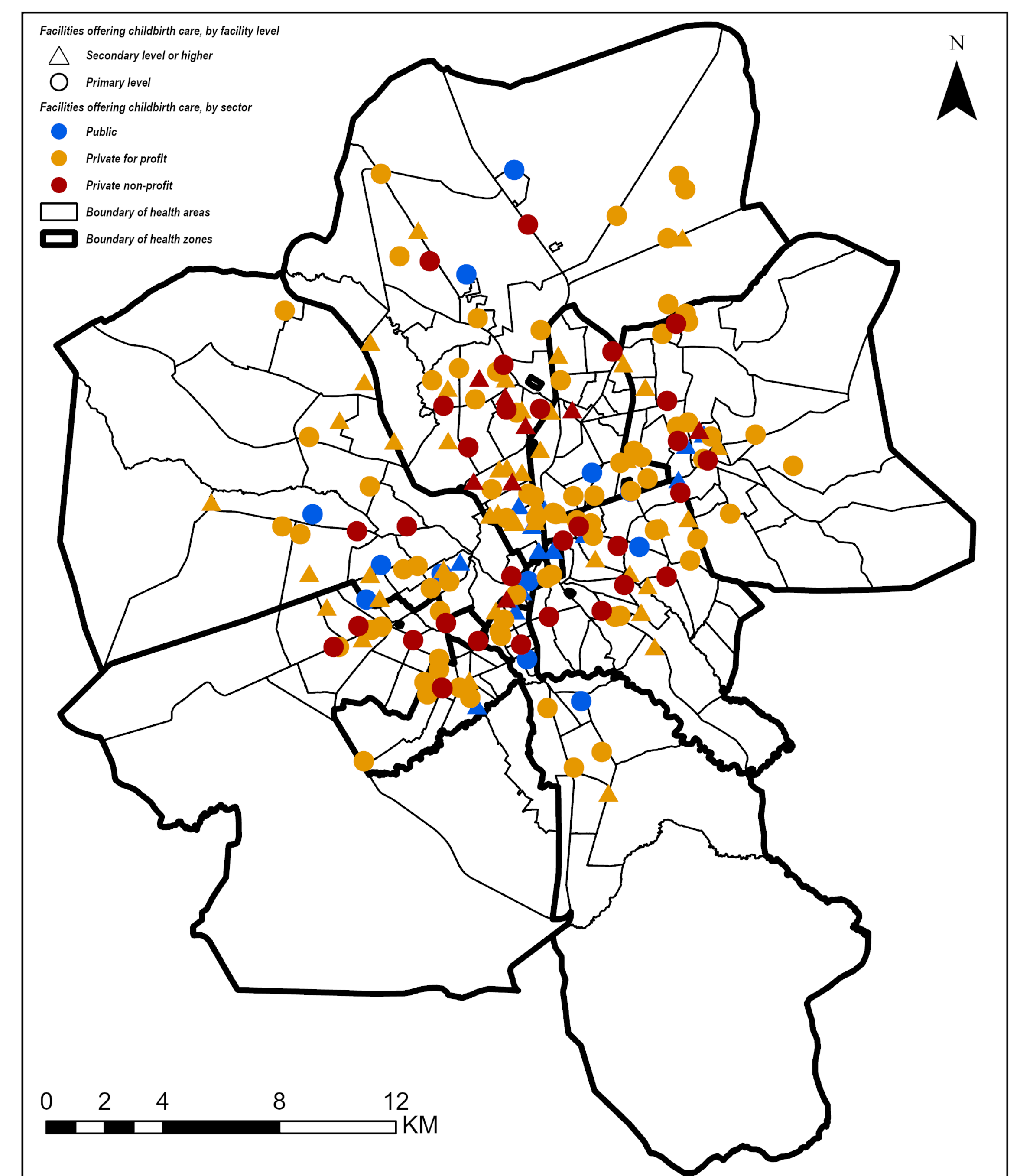


Figure 1. Distribution of healthcare facilities offering childbirth care (n=187) by sector and facility level in Lubumbashi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2024

Results

- Of the 187 healthcare facilities, most healthcare facilities were private (86.6%; 162/187); 64.2% (120/187) were primary-level
- Overall, 28 146 ANC visits, 13 725 HIV tests (48.8% HIV testing coverage), and 7 164 syphilis tests (25.5% syphilis testing coverage) were reported

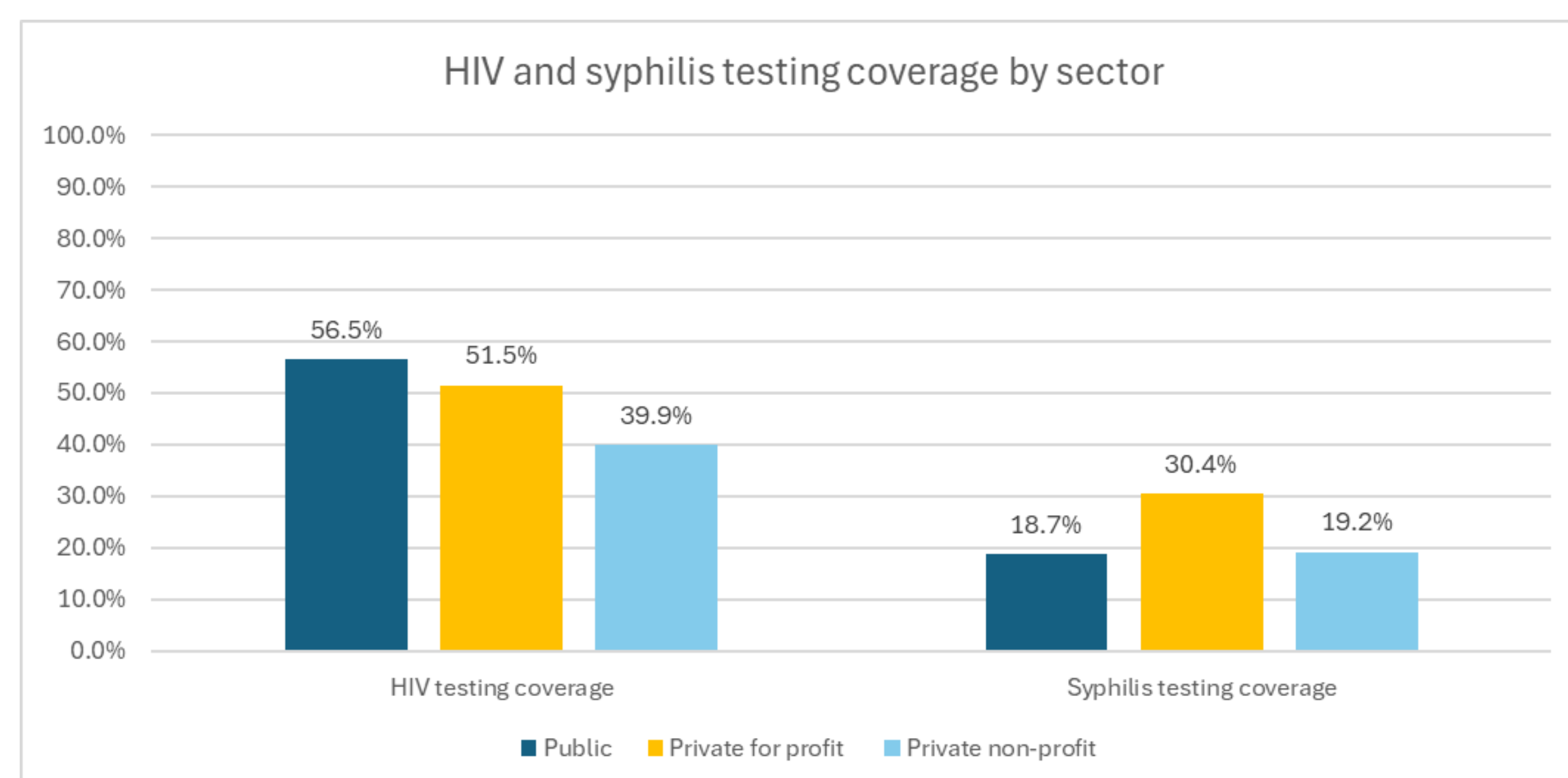


Figure 2. HIV and syphilis testing coverage described by healthcare facility sector

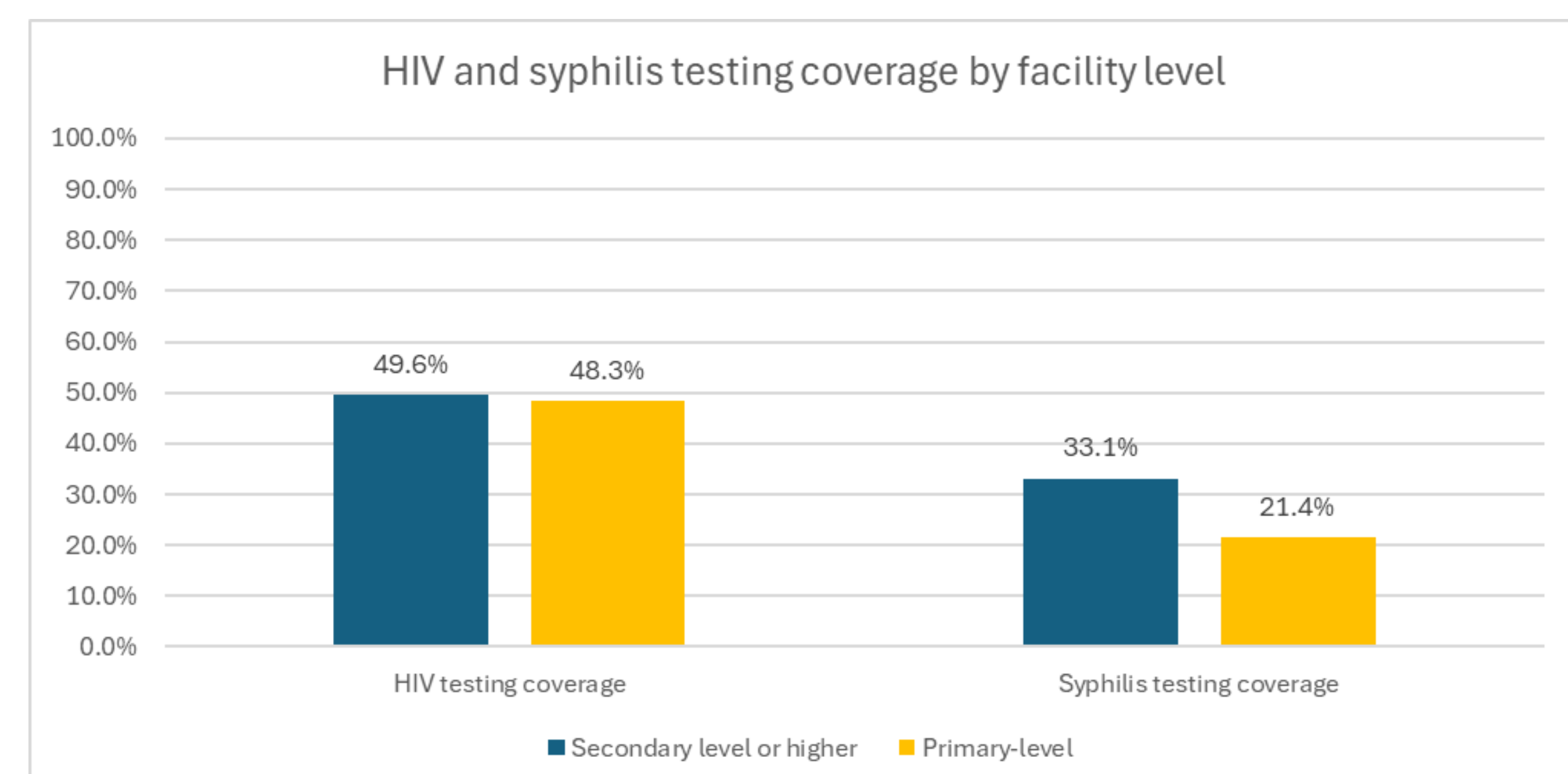


Figure 3. HIV and syphilis testing coverage described by healthcare facility level

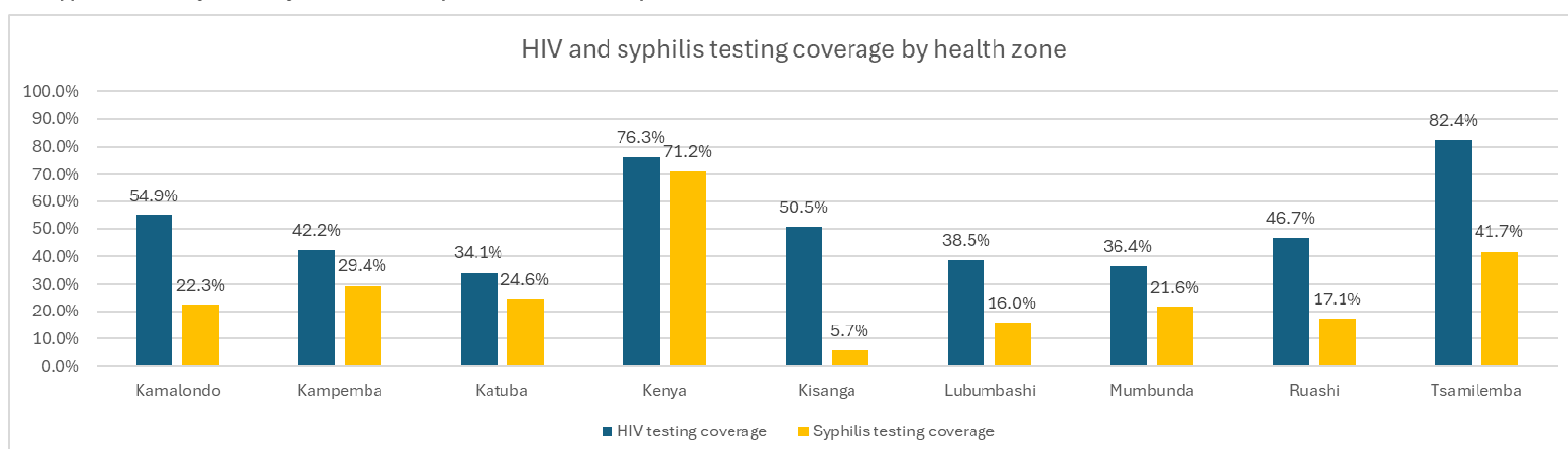


Figure 4. HIV and syphilis testing coverage described by health zone

Conclusion and recommendations

- Coverage of syphilis testing in ANC lags behind coverage of HIV testing** across healthcare sectors, facility levels, and health zones.
- Understanding why coverage of syphilis testing lags behind is essential. Promoting **broad adoption of dual HIV/syphilis rapid diagnostic tests** could support increased coverage and enhance maternal and perinatal health outcomes.

