The 2010 Malawi Demographic and Health Survey (MDHS) included HIV testing of over 7,000 women age 15-49 and over 6,800 men age 15-54. According to the survey, 10.6% of Malawians age 15-49 are HIV-positive.

HIV prevalence in the Southern Region is about twice as high as prevalence in the other regions. Overall, 12.9% of women and 8.1% of men are HIV-positive. HIV prevalence is two times higher in urban areas than in rural areas (17.4% versus 8.9%).

Women become infected at younger ages than men. Prevalence for both women and men increases with age until it peaks at age 35-39 for women (23.8%) and at age 40-44 for men (20.9%).

Women and men who have never been married are least likely to be HIV-positive. There has been little change in Malawi’s HIV prevalence since 2004. The small decreases seen here are not statistically significant and do not signify true changes in the population.

For women, HIV prevalence is highest among those who are widowed. HIV prevalence is also high among divorced and separated men and women. Women and men who have never been married are least likely to be HIV-positive.
HIV prevalence increases with household wealth among women and men.

HIV prevalence among young women age 15-24 is 2.7 times higher than among young men age 15-24.

Response rates and methodology: HIV prevalence data were obtained from testing dried blood spot (DBS) samples voluntarily provided by women 15-49 and men 15-54 who were interviewed in the 2010 MDHS. The DBS were collected using the finger stick method. Of the 15,957 eligible subjects, 87% provided DBS specimens. Coverage rates were higher in rural areas than urban areas (88% vs. 84%).