

# WHY DO HIV-INFECTED PATIENTS MISS SCHEDULED APPOINTMENTS?

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## BACKGROUND

Effective management of HIV as a chronic disease needs of a continuum of care which can only be achieved if patients are retained in care. Missed clinic visits have been related to worse clinical outcomes, and they are a significant predictor of loss to follow up.

Understanding the reasons for missed appointments may help to increase adherence to clinical schedules.

## OBJECTIVE

To evaluate the reasons why HIV-infected patients missed HIV medical visits in a large public hospital in Buenos Aires.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

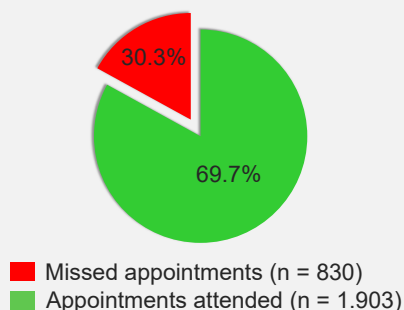
We performed a cross-sectional analysis including all subjects who missed an HIV-care appointment during a six-month period.

**Missed appointments** were defined as **those visits that were not cancelled** either by the patient or by the clinic for which **the patient did not arrive**.

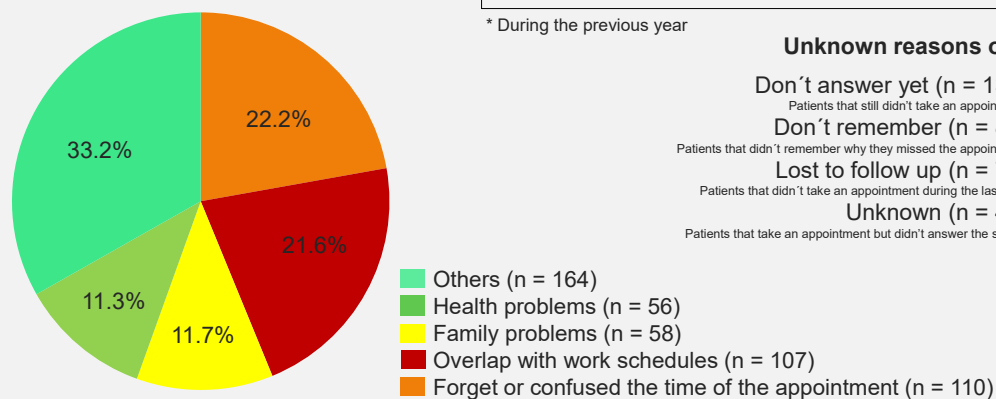
We collected patient-level data on demographic characteristics, immunological and virological status, and evaluated the reasons of missed visits through telephone calls or self-administered surveys.

## RESULTS

Scheduled appointments during the study period (n = 2.733)



Reasons of missed appointments (n = 495)

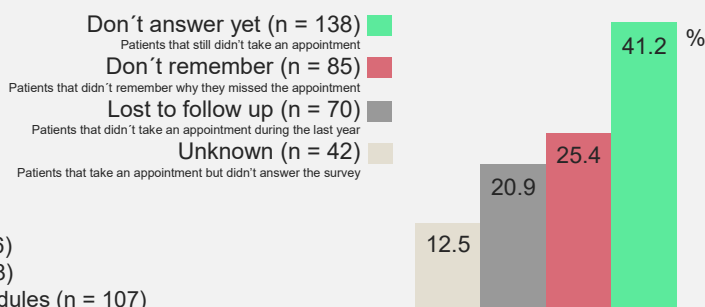


Sociodemographic characteristics of patients (n = 631)

Age (years); median (IQR)	40 (39-41)
Male sex: % (n)	67.4% (424/629)
Argentinian nationality: % (n)	73.1% (450/615)
Residence at Buenos Aires City: % (n)	56.4% (345/612)
Health insurance: % (n)	12.6% (75/592)
Level of education (years); median (IQR)	11 (7-12)
Employment: % (n)	39.5% (220/557)
Patients that didn't perform any viral load or CD4 count *	42.9% (271/631)
Patients that interrupted antiretroviral therapy for at least one month *	13.4% (91/675)

\* During the previous year

Unknown reasons of missed appointments (n = 335)



## CONCLUSION

We identified some frequent factors that caused patients to miss appointments.

Patients who underused HIV care had a negative impact on clinical outcomes in this cohort.

Novel interventions aimed at reducing missed appointments need to be based upon these findings.