

Chart choice card

Which chart answers which question, and the five labelling rules.

Question	Chart
How much in each group	Sorted bar chart, vertical axis from zero
How it changed over time	Line chart, time on the horizontal axis, gaps shown as breaks
How two measures relate	Scatter plot, one point per facility
The exact value to quote	A small table
Many facilities over time	Small multiples, one panel each, same axes

Five labelling rules

- Title says what and where. Axis labels say the measure and its unit. Rates carry their denominator in the label.
- The period and the source appear under every chart.
- The claim the chart makes is stated in one sentence in the caption.
- Fonts at least twelve point, and the chart must survive grey scale.
- A target line where a threshold matters, and one annotation at the month that matters.

Four ways a chart misleads

- A truncated axis on a bar chart.
- Counts where the question was about rates.
- A period that starts at the worst month.
- Twelve lines where three and a table would do.

Based on the ERAS Africa Basics of Data Analysis using Python course, 2026, the WHO Data Quality Review toolkit, the Ethiopian HMIS indicator reference and the pandas and matplotlib documentation. Free to copy and adapt with attribution.