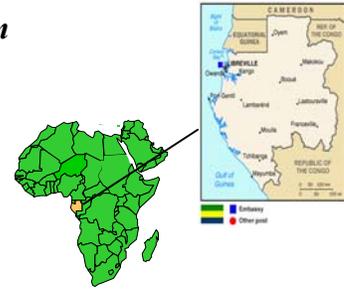




DoD HIV/AIDS Prevention Program Status Report:

Gabon



BACKGROUND

Introduction/General Information

The population of Gabon is estimated to be approximately 1.25 million people, with life expectancy estimates ranging from 49 to 53 years. French is the official language in Gabon; literacy is 62 to 66%, distributed disproportionately between men and women. Gabon has a developed and diversified economy, with oil as the principal export product; per capita income estimates range from \$3,300 to \$5,500.

Country HIV/AIDS Statistics and Risk Factors

The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in Gabon is estimated to be 9% of the adult population. The number of people believed to be living with HIV is 23,000. Identified significant risk factors include high-risk heterosexual contact with multiple partners and commercial sex workers.

Military HIV/AIDS Information

There are no reliable estimates available for the size of military forces in Gabon, and Gabonese Armed Forces have not performed force-wide testing for HIV.

PROPOSED PROGRAM

The Defense Attaché (DAO) in Gabon contacted DHAPP regarding funding for the Gabonese military HIV/AIDS prevention strategy. Specifically, the DAO requested funds to pay for HIV/AIDS information materials to be shared at the Gabonese military annual strategic planning meeting and also to support meeting attendance by HIV/AIDS prevention staff.

PROGRAM RESPONSE

Military-to-Military

Funding requested by the DAO for education and awareness campaign materials was sent to the US Embassy in January 2003. The DHAPP office awaits further word from the DAO regarding funding requirements for subsequent prevention activities.



Members of the Gabonese Armed Forces receive training as HIV/AIDS peer educators.

Contractor-Based Assistance

In addition to the assistance described above, Gabon is the recipient of aid from an external contractor funded by DHAPP. Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland, was awarded a contract to develop and implement a multi-country prevention program in Gabon and 3 other central African nations. Specific objectives in Gabon include:

- Increasing surveillance capacity,
- Developing infrastructure,
- Establishing a primary prevention program,
- Utilizing a train-the-trainer approach to develop a peer education network,
- Training medical personnel in sexually transmitted infection and HIV/AIDS syndromic management,
- Administering knowledge, attitude, practices and behavior survey to initiate a surveillance program, and

- Instituting serologic testing for HIV, and creating voluntary counseling and testing centers.



Lead instructor described the use of condoms as a method for preventing the spread of HIV to peer educator trainees from the Gabonese Armed Forces.

PROGRAM IMPACT

Because the Johns Hopkins project in Gabon is still in an early stage of development, program impact data are not yet available.