



*DoD HIV/AIDS Prevention Program
Status Report
May 2003 to September 2004*

Congo-Brazzaville



BACKGROUND

Introduction/General Information

The population of Congo is estimated to be 3 million people, with life expectancy averaging 49.51 years. French is the official language in Congo, which has a literacy rate of 83.8%, distributed disproportionately between the sexes. Congo is described as a developing nation with a well-diversified economy. The annual per capita income in Congo is \$700.

Country HIV/AIDS Statistics and Risk Factors

Congo has an estimated HIV/AIDS prevalence rate of 7%. Estimates of the number of people living with AIDS is 90,000. Identified high-risk factors include heterosexual contact with multiple partners and commercial sex workers.

Military HIV/AIDS Information

There are no reliable estimates available for the size of the Congolese Armed Forces (CAF). The HIV rate is estimated at 4% in the CAF, slightly below the general population.

PROPOSED PROGRAM

To date, no HIV/AIDS prevention plan has been submitted by the Military of the Republic of the Congo.

PROGRAM RESPONSE

Military-to-Military

None during this reporting period.

Contractor-Based Assistance

Johns Hopkins University received a contract from DHAPP to implement an HIV/AIDS prevention program in 3 central African nations, including Congo. While this program was in its infancy during the last reporting period, efforts were completed at the end of 2003. The main elements of this program included increasing HIV/AIDS surveillance capacity and infrastructure, establishing a primary prevention program, and developing a peer education program using a train-the-trainer approach. Johns Hopkins conducted 2 knowledge, attitudes, practices, and behavior (KAPB) surveys along with a serological survey of Congolese military forces.



DHAPP-sponsored Johns Hopkins University consultant meets with Congolese Minister of Health to plan HIV/AIDS intervention with Congolese Armed Forces.

Johns Hopkins trained 100 medical personnel in providing syndromic management for armed forces personnel diagnosed with STIs and to facilitate medical care of AIDS patients. In addition, a counseling and testing (CT) center was created and staffed with a group of 100 counselors who were also trained by Johns Hopkins.



DHAPP consultant meeting with the Congolese Minister of Defense.

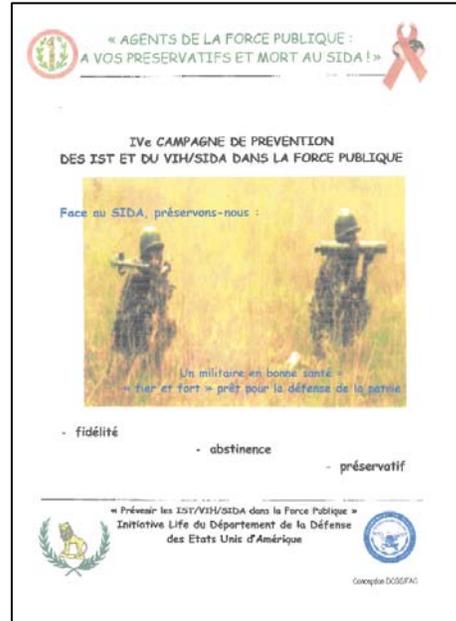
Coupled with its surveillance, treatment, and testing programs, Johns Hopkins also developed a comprehensive peer education campaign, which included a multi-equipped STI/HIV/AIDS information center in Brazzaville. Also included was the development of extensive BCC media, including pamphlets, brochures, and posters with culturally appropriate prevention messages, and condom demonstration models. Finally, peer educators were trained to describe, model, and encourage HIV preventive behaviors as well as promote protective and appropriate treatment of service members already infected.

Clinical Provider Training

Twenty five medical personnel received BCC training.

Interoperability

None during this reporting period.



DHAPP-sponsored HIV Prevention Program for the Congo is advertised in local language. The message on this poster focuses on prevention through fidelity, abstinence, and condom use.

PROGRAM IMPACT

Master Trainers and Peer Educators

As part of the BCC program, 109 military personnel and 44 family members received peer educator training.

Number of Troops Trained

With DHAPP support, the cadre of peer educators conducted 375 training sessions for more than 12,000 Congolese military troops.

Potential Number of Troops Affected

DHAPP-sponsored programs should reach the total Congolese Armed Forces; however, the exact size of the country's military is unknown. More than 70,000 people, including soldiers, gendarmes, and their families have been reached with HIV prevention messages.

Counseling and Testing (CT)

A counseling and testing center (CT) was established and 26 medical service members received counselor training. More than 1000 blood samples have been screened for HIV.

Laboratory Capability/Infrastructure

None during this reporting period.

Mass Awareness

A total of 15,000 HIV/AIDS prevention brochures were produced and distributed throughout the country.