

LESOTHO

DHAPP

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE HIV/AIDS
PREVENTION PROGRAM

REDUCING THE INCIDENCE OF HIV/AIDS
AMONG UNIFORMED PERSONNEL IN
SELECTED AFRICAN NATIONS AND BEYOND

WINNING BATTLES IN THE WAR AGAINST HIV/AIDS

BACKGROUND

Country Statistics

The population of Lesotho is estimated to be 1.9 million, with an average life expectancy of 34.5 years, shortened due to the AIDS epidemic. English and Sesotho are the official languages; the overall literacy rate is 84.8%. Literacy is significantly higher for females (95%) than for males (75%). The economy of Lesotho is primarily based on subsistence agriculture, especially livestock. Unemployment is very high, and a large number (35%) of active male wage earners seek employment in South Africa. The annual per capita income is estimated at \$3,200.



HIV/AIDS Statistics

Lesotho has the third highest HIV prevalence in the world. HIV prevalence is estimated to be 29%, with 320,000 people living with HIV/AIDS. Over 100,000 children have lost one or both parents to AIDS. The 25–29 age group is the most severely affected, with a prevalence of 39%. Risk factors include sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unprotected heterosexual contact with multiple partners, contact with commercial sex workers, and mother-to-child transmission. Approximately half of patients seeking treatment for STIs are HIV positive.

Military Statistics

The size of the armed forces is approximately 2000. As of this annual report, no information regarding HIV prevalence in the military was available.



PROGRAM RESPONSE

Military-to-Military Technical Assistance

DHAPP staff members maintained close collaborative interaction with the Lesotho Defense Force (LDF) and US Embassy representatives there. DHAPP staff members interacted with the LDF during monthly conference calls, during which the LDF provided updates on their current activities, as well as on the proposed expansion of efforts and the development of their strategy for the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator. DHAPP staff members provided technical assistance for the proposal and strategy development, as well as for monitoring and evaluation of current activities.

Proposed Future Activities

A proposal was received on behalf of the LDF for the 2006 fiscal year. The specific objectives of the proposed project include establishing a peer education training program, conducting mass awareness training on counseling and testing (CT), training military medical personnel, establishing porter camps for wellness, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis (TB), and STIs, establishing mother and child health clinics, and strengthening and expanding laboratory infrastructure.



OUTCOMES & IMPACT

Prevention

During FY05, the LDF HIV prevention program reported significant accomplishments during this and the previous reporting period, functioning out of the Makoanyane Military Hospital. One hundred troops (80 men, 20 women) were reached through these community outreach efforts with a primary message of abstinence and/or being faithful. Thirty military members were trained to provide this prevention message. In addition, 50 service members (35 men, 15 women) were reached with comprehensive prevention messages, and 53 were trained to provide this message to peers. The LDF supports 5 condom service outlets.

Care

During FY05, 2 outlets provided generalized and TB-specific palliative care for military patients with HIV/AIDS. During the year, 194 troops and family members received care at these outlets. Of these patients, 144 received care for TB. Thirty health care providers were trained in the provision of general palliative care, and an additional 14 were trained in providing TB care for HIV patients.

Counseling and Testing

Two CT outlets were supported by the LDF during FY05. During the year, 162 soldiers were tested and received their results. Eighteen military members were trained to provide this service.



Treatment

The LDF supported one service outlet which provided antiretroviral therapy (ART) for military members during FY05. By the end of the year, 177 military patients were established on ART, and 12 health workers were trained in the provision of ART. One laboratory had the capability of providing CD4 and/or lymphocyte testing, and 4 laboratory technicians were trained in laboratory services.