

RUSSIA

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 Russia is estimated to be 142.9 million people, with an average life expectancy of 67 years. Russian is the official language of Russia, which has an estimated literacy rate of 99.6%, evenly distributed between men and women. Russia ended 2005 with its seventh straight year of growth, averaging 6.4% annually since the financial crisis of 1998. Although high oil prices and a relatively cheap ruble are important drivers of this economic rebound, since 2000 investment and consumer-driven demand have played a noticeably increasing role. Real fixed capital investments have averaged gains greater than 10% over the last 5 years, and real personal incomes have realized average increases over 12%. The gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is \$11,000, with 17.8% of Russian people living below the poverty level.

HIV/AIDS Statistics

The HIV prevalence rate in Russia's general population is estimated at 1.1%, with approximately 940,000 individuals living with HIV/AIDS. The most vulnerable populations in Russia include intravenous drug users, commercial sex workers, and men who have sex with men. Intravenous drug use is thought to be the major factor fueling the epidemic. In some areas, HIV prevalence among intravenous drug users may be as high as 65%.



Military Statistics

The Russian military consists of approximately 1.5 million active-duty members. Russia expends 1.4% of its GDP for military purposes. Military HIV prevalence rates are unknown; however, according to data from the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, there were 2265 registered cases of HIV infection among military personnel, which accounts for 0.7% of the total population in Russia.

PROGRAM RESPONSE

In-Country Ongoing Assistance

In September 2006, a 10-person interagency team that included DHAPP staff members conducted a site visit to Russia to assess their HIV/AIDS programs. During this trip, the team met with government, medical, and military representatives, visited key HIV/AIDS program sites, and identified 2007 funding priorities.

Proposed Future Activities

DHAPP received two proposals for FY07 activities on behalf of the Russian military. The first, from Population Services International, included the following objectives: increase the capacity of military services to implement and maintain HIV prevention programs for members of the military, introduce a targeted behavior change communication (BCC) campaign for safer sex, introduce a targeted BCC campaign for substance abuse prevention, strengthen links between the military and civilian programs to increase access to counseling and testing services, and evaluate the need to increase the number of condoms accessible to military personnel.



The second proposal, from the Russian Red Cross, included the following objectives: implement prevention programs to combat the spread of HIV infection in military groups located in the territory of Samara Region and St. Petersburg, and reduce target group vulnerability to HIV infection by raising their awareness and knowledge regarding transmission and by promoting behavior change.

OUTCOMES & IMPACT

Because the program for HIV prevention in Russian military members is relatively new, no official indicators were collected this year. Russian military members participated in a study tour of US DoD sites, including HIV policy and treatment training with US military officials. DHAPP looks forward to the implementation of HIV prevention programs with Russian military members.

