



NIGERIA

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

Nigeria's estimated population is 138 million people, with an average life expectancy of 47 years. English is the official language of Nigeria, which has an estimated literacy rate of 68%, unevenly distributed between men and women. Following nearly 16 years of military rule, a new constitution was adopted in 1999, and a peaceful transition to civilian government was completed. The country is rich in oil, and after a long period of political instability and corruption, is undertaking some reforms under the new administration. The gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is \$2,200, with 70% of Nigerians living below the poverty level.

HIV/AIDS Statistics

The HIV prevalence rate in Nigeria's general population is estimated at 3.9%, a decrease from recent years. Nigeria has approximately 2.9 million individuals living with HIV/AIDS. Identified risk factors include sexually transmitted infections, heterosexual contact with multiple partners and with commercial sex workers, mother-to-child transmission, and blood transfusions.

Military Statistics

The Nigerian Ministry of Defence (NMOD) has 4 components: Army, Navy, Air Force, and civilian NMOD employees. The NMOD medical facilities serve the active-duty, retired, civilian NMOD, beneficiary dependent and civilians in the surrounding communities. The uniformed strength is approximately 80,000 to 90,000 active-duty members. Total catchments of patients is estimated at 1.2 million individuals. HIV testing is only mandatory on application to the uniformed services, peacekeeping deployment/redeployment, and for those individuals on

flight status. HIV prevalence figures or estimates for the military are not published. Nigeria allocates 1.5% of the GDP for military expenditures.



PROGRAM RESPONSE

In-Country Ongoing Assistance

The Walter Reed Army Institute of Research US Military HIV Research Program (USMHRP) maintains a fully serviced agency based at the US Embassy in Abuja. This office is known as the Department of Defense HIV Program in Nigeria (DODHPN). The office is staffed by a uniformed physician and 2 civilian US Government (USG) employees, 8 Foreign Service National employees, and 14 contracted employees. The office is divided into administrative, US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), and research sections. The office is dedicated to PEPFAR country-level management (partners with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the US Agency for International Development) participates in PEPFAR technical working groups and strategic vision, and Country Operational Plan (COP) development. In addition to the USG country-level management activities, the office also directly implements the HIV program activities in partnership with the NMOD. DODHPN is supported by US-based USMHRP staff for technical and administrative support and oversight; DHAPP through contracting, financial, and technical collaboration from San Diego and Naples; and USMHRP overseas technical support from Kenya, Uganda, and Thailand.

The NMOD-DoD (US Department of Defense) HIV Program continued to expand prevention, care, and treatment services in military and civilian communities during its third year of PEPFAR implementation. The program's full coordination with the NMOD has proved a strong foundation for creating and implementing activities that are improving infrastructure, increasing capacity, and ensuring the absorption of the program into the normal health care delivery system. These objectives are critical for sustainability, and a model for host-nation ownership of the program. In FY07, the NMOD contributed funding to support the HIV/AIDS Program activities; in addition, the President of

Nigeria authorized hiring 100 civil servants (30 physicians, 30 nurses, 20 pharmacists, 20 laboratory technicians) to support activities.

Prevention

During FY07, the NMOD–DoD HIV Program initiated abstinence and being faithful prevention programming at 10 military sites. A highlighted achievement during the reporting period is training 645 peer educators in abstinence and being faithful skills and HIV/AIDS prevention. The majority of those trained include in- and out-of-school youth. The DoD supported an indigenous organization, the Society of Students against Infectious-Diseases Trust, to conduct trainings. Military chaplains and imams also received HIV/AIDS training for the first time and are promoting abstinence and being faithful skills step-down training within the military barracks. Therefore, 5,203 individuals were reached with abstinence and being faithful prevention messages.

Additional prevention activities that focused beyond abstinence and being faithful were held, training 103 peer educators who then reached 3,235 individuals with comprehensive prevention messages. The NMOD–DoD HIV Program supports 8 targeted service condom outlets. Another achievement is that the NMOD–DoD HIV Program held its first official meetings with the Armed Forces Programme on AIDS Control to synergize prevention activities.

During FY07, the NMOD–DoD HIV Program conducted injection safety activities at 10 military sites, up from 5 in the prior reporting period. A highlighted achievement during the reporting period is training 37 military and civilian personnel in injection safety. This was achieved through participation and collaboration in the PEPFAR-wide project Making Medical Injections Safer.



During FY07, the NMOD–DoD HIV Program expanded prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) activities in 5 military facilities and commenced activities in 5 additional military sites. To strengthen the capacity of NMOD personnel to conduct PMTCT activities, 71 health care workers were trained during the reporting period.

This included training and clinical mentorship from the newly hired DoD PMTCT Officer and an on-site training specialist from the USMHRP, and external training at the Infectious Diseases Institute at Makerere University in Uganda. The NMOD-DoD Program staff counseled and tested a total of 5,142 pregnant women, exceeding targets. In addition, 392 of the pregnant women received a complete course of antiretroviral prophylaxis.



Care

The NMOD-DoD HIV Program increased palliative care services at 5 additional military sites during FY07. The Program now supports a total of 10 military facilities that service the NMOD, their dependents, and civilians living near their facilities. During FY07, 4,362 clients were receiving palliative care from the NMOD–DoD HIV Program, and 2,905 of them received treatment for tuberculosis. Seventy-five (75) individuals were trained in the provision of palliative care services in FY07. There were 5,242 troops and family members who were counseled and tested during the year, and 106 individuals were trained in the provision of counseling and testing (CT) services.

A highlighted achievement is the establishment of a training and empowerment center for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) at the Nigerian Army Reference Hospital. Support was provided for the refurbishment of the center, equipment, and training for PLWHA, with an emphasis on women. This center is one of the first of its kind in the military and provides income generation via training and support. Another achievement is the support of PLWHA support groups in military barracks. For instance, the Defence Health Club (Mogadishu Barracks) PLWHA support group is highly active and provides nutritional support, psychosocial support, and other services to PLWHA in the military and surrounding communities.

The NMOD–DoD HIV Program supports services for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC). In FY07, the Program provided support to 314 OVC, and trained 33 OVC caretakers.

One highlighted activity is the NMOD–DoD conducted its first outreach HIV Counseling and Testing (HCT) events held at 6 military bases. The outreach services were held in conjunction with a series of health bazaars, which are popular events that promote HIV prevention, stigma reduction, and referral services. Outreach HCT has allowed the program to access individuals who may feel more comfortable accessing services at the military facilities. The service appeals to both civilians and members of the military and civilian staff, evidenced by the fact that 80% of the Program’s regular client load are civilians. The outreach CT events, in contrast, often drew more soldiers than civilians, suggesting a decreased fear of career discrimination among members of the military in the outreach context, as opposed to a military medical setting.

The total number of individuals counseled and tested was 29,788. One hundred six (106) individuals were trained in the provision of CT services. This success is largely due to the popularity of the services among military communities. Military hospitals provide comparatively good conditions for rolling out CT services. Many Nigerians are accustomed to using military hospitals for low-cost routine medical services and are receptive to accessing HIV testing at the same facilities.

Treatment

In the 10 service sites that provide antiretroviral therapy (ART) for the NMOD, 3,743 patients were newly initiated on ART. At the end of the reporting period, 4,602 patients were on ART. In FY07, 68 health workers were trained in the provision of ART services according to the national standards. Sixty-eight (68) laboratory personnel were trained in the provision of lab-related services.

A highlighted achievement during the reporting period is the provision of high-quality, centralized training to 59 laboratorians on quality management in the clinical laboratory, hematology using the Coulter AcT 5 Diff Hematology Analyzer, CT, and clinical chemistry using the Vitros 250/DT60 Chemistry System. The training programs were conducted by the NMOD–DoD Program and in collaboration with the Institute for Human Virology-Nigeria (IHVN)/ AIDS Care and Treatment in Nigeria (ACTION). These trainings were in addition to the on-site training provided during the installation of Vitros chemistry analyzers at 9 sites during the reporting period. Extensive electrical refurbishments at 4 sites have ensured a stable power supply to the laboratories and greatly improved the laboratory working environment at these sites. The electrical renovation process is ongoing at newer sites. The monthly reporting process whereby sites provide data on routine activity, reagent needs and the initiation of procurement via the Supply Chain Management System as well as the utilization of local laboratory supply vendors has improved the ability of the laboratories to be stocked sufficiently.



Other

During FY07, the NMOD–DOD HIV Program provided 11 local organizations with technical assistance in strategic information (SI). This includes the NMOD Emergency Plan Implementation, as well as 10 military facilities: Defence Headquarters Medical Center – Mogadishu Barracks (FCT), 44 Nigerian Army Reference Hospital (Kaduna), Nigerian Naval Hospital (Ojo), 445 Nigerian Air Force Hospital (Ikeja), 82 Division Hospital (Enugu), Nigerian Air Force Hospital (Jos), Nigerian Naval Hospital (Calabar), Naval Medical Centre (Warri), Nigerian Army Hospital (Port Harcourt), and 45 Nigerian Air Force Hospital (Makurdi).

A highlighted achievement during the reporting period is SI training for 23 individuals. Another achievement is the deployment of an electronic patient registry at 2 military facilities. This pilot program will help the NMOD–DoD to capture real-time data and enhance data quality.

The NMOD has dedicated an office, the Emergency Plan Implementation Committee (EPIC), to support EP activities, with a 10-person staff and a flag officer as leader. The office has received 3 continuous years of “counterpart funding” (funding provided by the Nigerian Government to specifically augment donor funding). During FY07, the counterpart funds were increased to \$1.5 million and have supported NMOD–DoD technical working groups, site operational funds, Steering Committee meetings, and refurbishments. The NMOD–DoD HIV Program has provided training on policy development and system strengthening to 10 military facilities. The Program also provides support to EPIC.

Proposed Future Activities

Ongoing successful Nigerian military and partner programming was expanded to include additional aspects of comprehensive prevention, care, and treatment for military members and their families. All proposed activities were submitted to the Nigeria Country Team, and were included in the FY08 COP.

