

CAMEROON

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

Because of its modest oil resources and favorable agricultural conditions, Cameroon has one of the best-endowed primary commodity economies in sub-Saharan Africa. Still, it faces many of the same serious problems of other underdeveloped countries, such as a top-heavy civil service and a generally unfavorable climate for business enterprise. Cameroon's estimated population is 18.5 million people, with an average life expectancy of 53 years. English and French are the official languages of Cameroon, which has an estimated literacy rate of 68%, with uneven distribution between men and women. The GDP per capita is \$2,400, with an unemployment rate of 30%.

HIV/AIDS Statistics

The HIV prevalence rate in Cameroon's general population is estimated at 5.1%. Cameroon has approximately 500,000 individuals living with HIV/AIDS. The primary identified risk factor in the population is unprotected heterosexual contact.

Military Statistics

The Cameroon Armed Forces (CAF) comprises approximately 26,000 members. Cameroon allocates 1.3% of the GDP for military expenditures. Since 1990, 4 HIV surveillance studies have been conducted in the military; the most recent study, conducted in 2005, revealed a military prevalence of 11.3% - twice the rate in the general population.



PROGRAM RESPONSE

In-Country Ongoing Assistance

The JHCP has continued its efforts to provide technical assistance to the CAF in order to improve its HIV/AIDS prevention programs.

Foreign Military Financing Assistance

Cameroon was awarded Foreign Military Financing (FMF) funding for the acquisition of laboratory equipment, and supporting reagents and supplies related to the diagnosis and treatment of HIV/AIDS. This award was appropriated for 2003, 2005 and 2006. Funding for 2003 and 2005 was released for expenditure near the end of FY05 and the beginning of FY07, respectively. To date, funding for the 2003 appropriation has been used to procure a CD4 counter, ELISA reader and washer, hematology analyzer, chemistry analyzer, microscope, incubator, and other supporting lab equipment, reagents and supplies for the main military hospital. Plans for the remaining 2003, 2005, and 2006 funding include outfitting several remote military health clinics throughout the country with basic equipment, supplies, and reagents needed for HIV infection prevention, diagnosis, and treatment.



Prevention and Care

Throughout FY08, 85 educational sessions took place, and approximately 2,735 troops were reached with comprehensive prevention messages. In addition, the JHCP provided technical assistance to the CAF by conducting a laboratory needs assessment at some of the military hospitals in support of expending FMF funding. Please see paragraph above for equipment purchases.

Proposed Future Activities

In FY08, DHAPP received a proposal from the Global Viral Forecasting Initiative (Dr. Nathan Wolfe, formerly of JHCP, is the founder and principal investigator) on behalf of the CAF for activities. The proposed activities are (1) conduct HIV surveillance along with a knowledge, attitudes, and practices survey in all 10 garrisons in Cameroon, with a total sample size of 2,500 troops; and (2) conduct refresher training for 250 peer educators and 50 counselors in military garrisons.

