

NIGERIA AND HIV/AIDS

BACKGROUND: Nigeria, with an estimated population of 120 million, is the most populous country in Africa. Although the first case of AIDS in Nigeria was reported in 1986, the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (GON) did not conduct a HIV sentinel sero-prevalence survey until 1990. In 1990/91 the national prevalence rate was roughly 1.8 percent. Over the past ten years this rate has steadily risen to 5.4 percent in 1999. Currently, there are roughly over 2.6 million adult Nigerians living with HIV/AIDS. Nigeria has the highest number of HIV/AIDS infected adults in West Africa and accounts for 11 percent of worldwide HIV/AIDS.

STATISTICS:

- The HIV prevalence rate in urban areas ranges between 1.7 percent for low-risk groups to 46.5 percent for high risk groups (sex workers);
- Approximately 2.6 million adult Nigerians are living with HIV/AIDS. This number is expected to increase to about 4.9 million people by the year 2003;
- An estimated 500,000 people became infected with HIV/AIDS in 1998.

HIV/AIDS Deaths AIDS has killed more than 500,000 Nigerians. Experts believe that the number of HIV/AIDS deaths in Nigeria for the period 1995 to 2015 will surpass the number of such deaths in all African countries with the exception of South Africa and Kenya.

HIV in Women In 1996, 7 percent of pregnant women in urban antenatal clinics and 4.5 percent of women in all antenatal clinics tested positive for HIV. A 1996 survey of female sex workers found that 35 percent were HIV-positive.

HIV/AIDS in the Military Although there is no official data on HIV/AIDS rates in the military, there has been a significant rise in the number of Nigerian peacekeeping troops that have required medical evacuation due to AIDS. Moreover, the number of military hospital beds occupied by HIV/AIDS patients is growing.

HIV in Youth Almost 19 percent of HIV infections among women attending antenatal clinics are in 16- to 20-year-olds. More than 5 percent of all people in this age group are HIV-positive.

Children and HIV/AIDS In 1998, 140,000 children were living with HIV/AIDS, and 184,000 children lost parents due to AIDS. Currently, more than 600,000 children have lost parents due to AIDS.

Socioeconomic Impact Adults younger than 40 years old account for almost 72 percent of HIV infections. Since HIV/AIDS illness and deaths are occurring in the most productive segment of the population, it is having a devastating effect on families, communities, businesses, and the economy.

National Response: At the national level, HIV/AIDS awareness and response has increased markedly, since the new civilian government took office in May 1999. Under the military regime, scant attention was given to HIV/AIDS; the national budget for HIV/AIDS was \$3,000 in 1997. Although more resources are needed, the National Action Committee on AIDS has a \$500,000 budget. President Obasanjo participated in the December 1, 1999 HIV/AIDS awareness day ceremonies and has instructed the public health agencies to coordinate closely with donor agencies in promoting HIV/AIDS prevention. However, the national HIV/AIDS program needs financial and human resources to strengthen prevention and care programs as well as programs to reduce the stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS.

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USAID Response USAID/Nigeria is one of a few donors that have an HIV/AIDS program. HIV/AIDS funding for FY 2000 is \$8.75 million that includes \$3.6 million from the Presidential LIFE Initiative. This is a 200 percent increase over the \$ 2.7 million in FY 1999, which included \$800,000 of supplemental funding for AIDS orphans. Prior to the election of the new civilian government, all USAID's HIV/AIDS assistance was given to non-governmental organizations. In FY 1999, USAID also looked at ways to support the military HIV/AIDS program and the National Action Committee on AIDS (NACA). USAID's current HIV/AIDS program comprises 12 behavior change communication (preventative) activities, eight activities that focus on care and support of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), two activities that focus on care and support of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS and one activity on AIDS impact modeling and advocacy. USAID collaborates with the United Kingdom in supporting condom social marketing.