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Gabon : HIV/AIDS

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GABON

Gabon is in West Africa and has a population of 1.8 million.

This country is one of low income.

Main Religion:

Christianity (Roman Catholic)

Type of Government:

Republic

Main Language: French

The Problems Facing Gabon Today

Gabon is a country that can be found in West Africa. The population is 1.8 million people and is politically structured as a republic.

The economist can be quoted stating, “The government is led by the prime minister and an appointed Council of Ministers” (The Economist). This is a very similar setup to the government structure in England. The country of Gabon has a couple of key problems facing itself within these past couple of years. One of their bigger issues is water and electricity. In one of their largest cities, Libreville, there seems to have been a large influx in civilians in the past couple of years, causing a strain on the water and electrical company that works for the city (AllAfrica). It seems that the city is ill equipped to handle that many people living there at the same time. Not only is there a water and electricity shortage, but there has been some unrest in the political atmosphere. In 2016, there was an election for President in Gabon. From what the New York Times is stating, there seemed to be much debate on if the election was rigged in the incumbent's favor. Because of this, there was some violence that occurred on the streets. There were fires, and even some shots were fired resulting in a civilian's death, an injured officer, and many other injured civilians (Barry & Searcey, 2016).



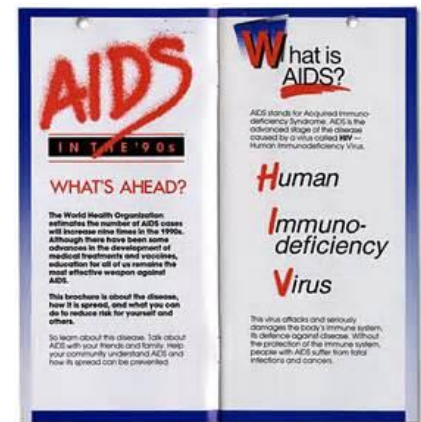
Public Health Problem: HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS has been a problem for a lot of countries throughout the years and there has been some pushback against the disease in the past couple of years. When researching, I found an article that specifically said that the worst health problem facing Gabon was HIV/AIDS (Cairns, 2013). HIV is a virus that weakens a person's immune system by killing off the important cells that fight off diseases and infections. To date, there is no cure of HIV; however, it can be managed by medicine (CDC, 2017). HIV has multiple risk factors that include having unprotected sex, having another STI, using intravenous drugs, and are an uncircumcised male (Mayo). Anyone can be affected by HIV; however, there are many different groups of people that are at higher risk than others.

These different groups are men who have sex with men, injection drug users, women, youth, people over the age of 50, and people in the criminal justice system (NIH, 2012). HIV seems to be a virus that has been an issue in Gabon and in other countries in Africa. One of the biggest reasons as to why Gabon is having so many issues with keeping HIV under control is that most of the country is extremely impoverished and that makes it very hard to give each citizen a test or to even implement any sort of program to help the people who have HIV or at risk for HIV. (Laga, Matendo, & Buve, 2008).

There was a study done to look at how the testing is done in Gabon and in other countries. What this study found was that there was a severe gap in testing. Adult males who have less than primary education and adolescents are less likely to have been ever tested for HIV than women, adults with higher education, and adults in their 30s (Staveteig, Croft, Kampa, & Head, 2017). There has obviously been a lot of debate about what should be done to help those affected by HIV or even at risk of HIV. What seems to be the audience that needs targeting is men, adolescents, the under educated, and the poor. There needs to be some type of program or way of getting these people tested or giving them information. There was a study done that went and surveyed people who were getting treatment for HIV. The study found that around 50 percent of the people studied used a condom with their main partner (Yaba, Msellati, & Chippaux, 2013). This is a problem because they could pass their illness onto others. Something that could be done is educate people when they are young, preferably when they are still in school. Not only would it educate the children, but it would also give the information to the family members. You

could have health officials come in and do a series of lectures along with giving pamphlets, condoms, etc. to take home and distribute to the rest of the family. The pamphlet would just show basic information that can be understood by the masses and if anyone was interested in learning more, would give other places to find information on HIV. There may be issues with getting the information out to the poor and under educated. Usually those two go hand in hand, especially if the families must pay for education or live too far away from schools. What can be done in those areas is finding a common place they congregate. This place might be a type of religious building or something else that is a popular place for people to congregate.



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