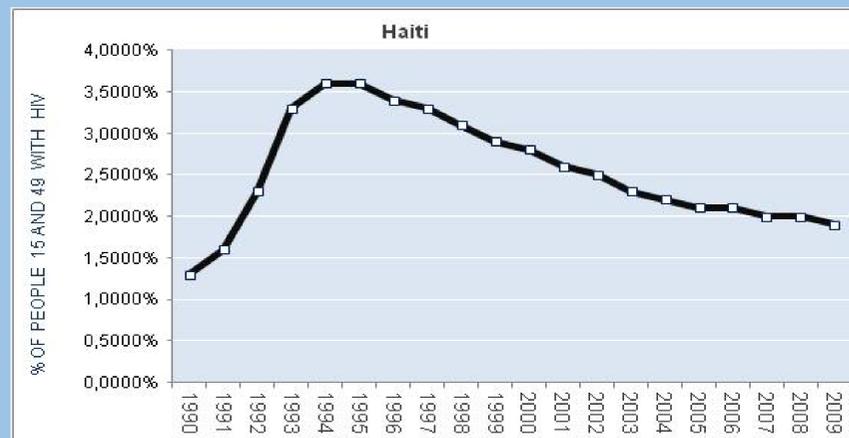


Introduction/Health Issue

In Haiti, prevalence of HIV/AIDS is higher than any other country in the Western Hemisphere, with rates at 3.4% compared with 1.5% in Jamaica and .4% in Cuba in 2004. In this country, HIV/AIDS has claimed the lives of 7,500 people and has orphaned approximately 100,000 children (UNAIDS). Extreme poverty contributes to these high rates as people lack access to knowledge about transmission risks, the financial resources for treatment, and access to basic reproductive health services.



HIV/AIDS Prevention Efforts: PIH and GHESKIO

The main response in Haiti towards this issue is based on the efforts of the Haitian Ministry of Health working in collaboration with two non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Partners in Health and Gheskio, to both prevent and treat cases of HIV/AIDS. Both programs work with the government to create and implement a national plan for prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS and as a result, prevalence of HIV/AIDS has declined throughout Haiti. Partners in Health (PIH) is an NGO associated with Harvard Medical School that works with a sister organization in Haiti called Zanmi Lasante. It is located in Haiti's Central Plateau and targets mostly rural communities. GHESKIO works in Port-au-Prince, which is home to some of the world's largest poorest urban slums.

Services Provided by PIH and GHESKIO

- preventative and treatment services including free counseling, diagnosis, and testing for HIV
- free follow-up care as well as subsidies for transportation and nutrition supplements
- antiretroviral services
- programs that train nurses and community health workers who come from low income backgrounds
- providing services that prevent mother to child transmission of the disease including education programs on various alternative feeding practices for infants, antiretroviral treatment during pregnancy and delivery, and follow up services after delivery to ensure that infants do not contract the disease

Evaluating the Impact of PIH and Gheskio

- the rate of voluntary counseling and testing of pregnant women went from 30% to over 90%
- over 90% of pregnant women were receiving treatment to decrease vertical transmission of HIV
- transmission of the virus to infants went from 27% to 9.2%
- treatment outcomes from antiretroviral therapy have a survival rate of 94%
- expansion of antiretroviral services throughout the country, increase in pharmaceutical medicine stocks, and improvement in laboratory equipment.
- By 2008, together they provided 131 voluntary counseling and testing centers throughout the country and train 500 people each year
- As a result 2,000 patients were being tested, 120 treated for antiretroviral therapy, and 300 patients were utilizing primary care services each month



Conclusions

The strong, high-quality community health care approaches of PIH and GHESKIO are extremely successful and effective in reducing HIV/AIDS. These NGOs are able to make use of their resources efficiently and work closely with the government and in turn have created a system that provides quality services that are available and accessible. As a result of their interventions, HIV/AIDS rates in Haiti have declined to 2.1% and continue to drop, demonstrating the effectiveness of these programs that have earned their status at the forefront of HIV/AIDS programs around the world.



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