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COI QUERY

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COI QUERY RESPONSE - Cameroon

Treatment by society of people with HIV/AIDS in Cameroon

Around half a million people are HIV positive in Cameroon.¹ According to the Ministry of Public Health of Cameroon, the prevalence in adult population is 2.7 %, and the most affected regions are South, the East, Adamawa, North-West, South-West, and Centre.² According to a February 2024 press release by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), 'HIV prevalence was 24.3% among sex workers, 20.6% among men who have sex with men and 4% among prisoners—while the rate is 2.6% among the general population'.³ Sources indicated that the prevalence was higher among women.⁴ For example, a report by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), referring to 2020 data, found that in Cameroon, 'women and girls are the most exposed to the HIV/AIDS pandemic (two women are infected compared to one man and three girls are infected compared to one boy)'.⁵ According to an article by Voice of America (VOA), women can get tested for diseases including HIV during their pregnancy and are eligible for free treatment, if positive.⁶ While people with HIV faced difficulties in accessing health care, since April 2023, the Universal Health Coverage Program includes 'a wide range of essential HIV services at public health facilities'.⁷

1. Societal treatment of people with HIV/AIDS in Cameroon

Sources indicated that HIV is associated with stigma in Cameroonian society.⁸ Stigma tends to be stronger in rural communities where people also face limited access to testing.⁹ A study

¹ Bekolo, C. E. et al., The declining trend in HIV prevalence from population-based surveys in Cameroon between 2004 and 2018: myth or reality in the universal test and treat era?, 13 March 2023, [url](#); Cameroon, Cameroon Ministry of Public Health (Le Ministère de la Santé Publique), Cameroon National Strategic Plan For fight against HIV/AIDS and STIs 2021-2023, 2021, [url](#), p. 13; DW, HIV/AIDS in Cameroon: Living positively with the virus, 30 November 2022, [url](#); UNAIDS, Cameroon, n.d., [url](#); VOA News, Cameroon Says Conflict Prevents Access to AIDS Treatment, 1 December 2022, [url](#); WHO, Cameroon making progress in the fight against HIV, 4 December 2023, [url](#)

² Cameroon, Cameroon Ministry of Public Health (Le Ministère de la Santé Publique), Cameroon National Strategic Plan For fight against HIV/AIDS and STIs 2021-2023, 2021, [url](#), p. 11

³ UNAIDS, Expertise France partners with UNAIDS to fight HIV stigma and discrimination in western and central Africa, 28 February 2024, [url](#)

⁴ Bekolo, C. E. et al., The declining trend in HIV prevalence from population-based surveys in Cameroon between 2004 and 2018: myth or reality in the universal test and treat era?, 13 March 2023, [url](#); UNESCO, How HIV education can save lives: A woman's journey from stigma to advocating for health and knowledge in Cameroon, last updated 19 December 2023, [url](#)

⁵ UNOCHA, Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2022, 14 April 2022, [url](#), pp. 22-23

⁶ VOA News, Cameroon Says Conflict Prevents Access to AIDS Treatment, 1 December 2022, [url](#)

⁷ USAID (United States Agency for International Development), Universal Health Coverage to Revolutionize HIV Care in Cameroon with the U.S. Government's Contribution, November 2023, [url](#)

⁸ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report Cameroon, 19 March 2024, [url](#), p. 23; DW, HIV/AIDS in Cameroon: Living positively with the virus, 30 November 2022, [url](#); UNESCO, How HIV education can save lives: A woman's journey from stigma to advocating for health and knowledge in Cameroon, Last update:19 December 2023, [url](#); WHO, 4 December 2023, Cameroon making progress in the fight against HIV, [url](#)

⁹ TheBodyPro, Overcoming Barriers to HIV Testing in Rural Cameroon, 21 June 2023, [url](#)

published in March 2023 found that ‘social concerns related to gossip or losing friends were of the greatest concern’ among people living with HIV.¹⁰

People with HIV reportedly faced discrimination,¹¹ isolation,¹² rejection by family members,¹³ and lacked resources to seek legal help.¹⁴ The United States Department of State (USDOS) reported that there were ‘anecdotal reports’ of discrimination in employment in the private sector.¹⁵

2. Societal treatment of single women with HIV/AIDS without male support network in Cameroon

Information was scarce among the sources consulted by EUAA within time constraints. However, the following information may be relevant.

An article by Catholic Relief Services (CRS), an international humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States, reported on the KIDDS project - Key Interventions to Develop Systems and Services for Orphans and Vulnerable Children, which provides support to people affected by HIV across all of Cameroon.¹⁶ The support provided included medical care as well as providing grants to start small businesses, as reported by articles in the period of 2022-2023.¹⁷

Additional information on the situation of women without a male support network in Cameroon can be found in the EUAA query response on [Situation of single women in Yaoundé and Douala](#), published on 26 January 2022.

3. Difference in treatment by society between the Anglophone and Francophone regions of people with HIV/AIDS

Information on difference in treatment between the Anglophone and Francophone regions of people with HIV/AIDS could not be found among the sources consulted by EUAA within time constraints.

¹⁰ Parcesepe, A. M. et al., HIV-Related Stigma, Social Support, and Symptoms of Mental Health Disorders Among People with HIV Initiating HIV Care in Cameroon. AIDS Patient Care STDS, March 2023, in: National Library of Medicine, [url](#)

¹¹ Erasing 76 Crimes, Cameroon lawyers plan free legal aid for LGBTQI and HIV+ clients, 12 August 2022, [url](#); USDOS, US Department of State, 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Cameroon, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 49

¹² USDOS, US Department of State, 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Cameroon, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 49

¹³ DW, HIV/AIDS in Cameroon: Living positively with the virus, 30 November 2022, [url](#)

¹⁴ Erasing 76 Crimes, Cameroon lawyers plan free legal aid for LGBTQI and HIV+ clients, 12 August 2022, [url](#)

¹⁵ USDOS, US Department of State, 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Cameroon, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 49

¹⁶ CRS, Helping women with HIV pursue their dreams in Cameroon, 28 February 2023, [url](#)

¹⁷ CRS, Proper HIV treatment in Cameroon, 2 February 2022, [url](#); CRS, Cameroon women take charge of their health, 18 January 2023, [url](#); CRS, Creating opportunities for families living with HIV in Cameroon, 28 February 2023, [url](#)

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