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# Mozambique: HIV/AIDS

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# MOZAMBIQUE

**Location:** Mozambique is in Southeastern Africa and borders the Mozambique Channel. Its neighboring countries are South Africa, Tanzania, Malawi, and Zimbabwe. It is also located next to the Indian Ocean. (CIA, 2018)

**Population:** Total population is 26, 573, 706 people. The top four most common races/ethnicities are African (99.68%), Euro Africans (.2%), Indian (.08%), and Europeans (.06%). Some of the most popular tribes are Markhuwa, Tsonga, Lomwe, and others. It is mostly known as a country of emigration. (CIA, 2018)

**Religion:** The most common religions are as follows, Catholics (28.4%), Muslims (17.9%), Zionist Christians (15.5%), and Protestants (2.2%). (CIA, 2018)

**Language:** Emarkhuwa (25.3%), Xichangana (10.3%), and the official language, Portuguese (10.7%). (CIA, 2018)

**Government:** Mozambique has a Presidential Republic. Their current president is Filipe Jacinto Nyusi who has been in office since 2015. Furthermore, their law is a mixture between Portuguese Civil Law and Customary Law. Their presidents are elected by absolute majority vote. (CIA, 2018)

**Challenges:** Mozambique often faces problems with malaria, which mainly affects children. Malaria accounts for about a quarter of all deaths in children under the age of five (Our Africa, n.d). There has been a total of 4.3 million cases of malaria since 2009 (WHO, 2009). Furthermore, Mozambique also faces issues with poverty. Approximately 70% of the population lives in poverty, with most living at 2 dollars a day (Our Africa, n.d). Due to their problem with poverty, malnutrition is also a big issue. One fifth of children under the age of five are malnourished (WHO 2000-2009). Mozambique also faces challenges with illicit drugs. Some of these drugs include South Asian hashish, heroin, South American cocaine, methaqualone, and cannabis (CIA, 2018). Some of the drugs are used for local consumption while others are being exported. Finally, a big challenge in Mozambique is HIV/AIDS which affects a large part of their population. The health problem of HIV/AIDS will be further explored below.



Figure 1 Source: <http://www.world-guides.com>

**What is HIV/AIDS:** Human immunodeficiency virus causes acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, is a virus that can spread through bodily fluids. It is known for attacking the immune system and specifically targets the CD4 cells. After a while, so many of the CD4 cells are attacked that the body can no longer fight infections and disease. HIV/AIDS is most commonly transmitted through a variety of sexual behaviors or sharing needles and syringes among each other. To know if one is at risk of having HIV/AIDS, one should get tested between the ages of 13 and 64 sometime during their lifetime (CDC, 2016). In Mozambique, there are 802,659 people living with HIV and a prevalence rate of 10.5% between the ages of 15 and 49 as of 2015 (CDC, 2016).

**Basic Epidemiology:** Mozambique faces a significant issue with HIV/AIDS. It is a major threat among young women between the ages of 15-24 (Our Africa, n.d). This is true because only 12% of women use contraception, putting them at risk of unprotected sex and increasing the transmission of HIV/AIDS. In places like Mozambique, teen girls are three to four times for likely than teen boys to have HIV/AIDS. It was further shown that women were more vulnerable to having HIV/AIDS because of insufficient economic, educational, socio-economical, and legal support putting them more at risk of having unprotected sex (Underwood & Schwant, 2015). In Mozambique, women can enter full sexual relationships as soon as they are fertile, which is why young women are at such elevated risk (Our Africa, n.d). Mozambique has had an estimated of 34,000 deaths related to HIV since 2015 mostly targeting adults who are 15 years or older.



Figure 2 Source: <http://www.udphoto.com>

**Interventions/Preventions:** Some studies have been done on couples in which one partner in the relationship has tested positive for HIV/AIDS. These studies have helped to provide preventative strategies where regular HIV testing is done for couples and especially for young and adolescent adults before they get married or begin living with someone (Juga et al, 2017). Furthermore, the National AIDS Council among other groups are attempting to lower infections among all ages from 105,000 in 2014 to 78,000 in 2019 and reduce the number of deaths from 80,000 to 56,000. This would be possible by increasing the interventions in high-risk groups (Korenromp et al, 2015). Finally, the CDC and Mozambique's Ministry of Health have worked together on HIV prevention care in the form of strengthening laboratory, surveillance, and work force capacity. The CDC also aids in delivery of antiretroviral therapy (ART) to about 30,000 adults and children (CDC, 2016).

**My Suggestion:** I believe it is extremely important to educate the population of Mozambique and focus more on the young women who are being affected. Providing clinics for women to have a safe place to go for any information they might need is also crucial. The clinics could also provide testing and support to anyone affected. Furthermore, I think it is important to make condoms more accessible for women because it would really help stress the importance of having protected sex.

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