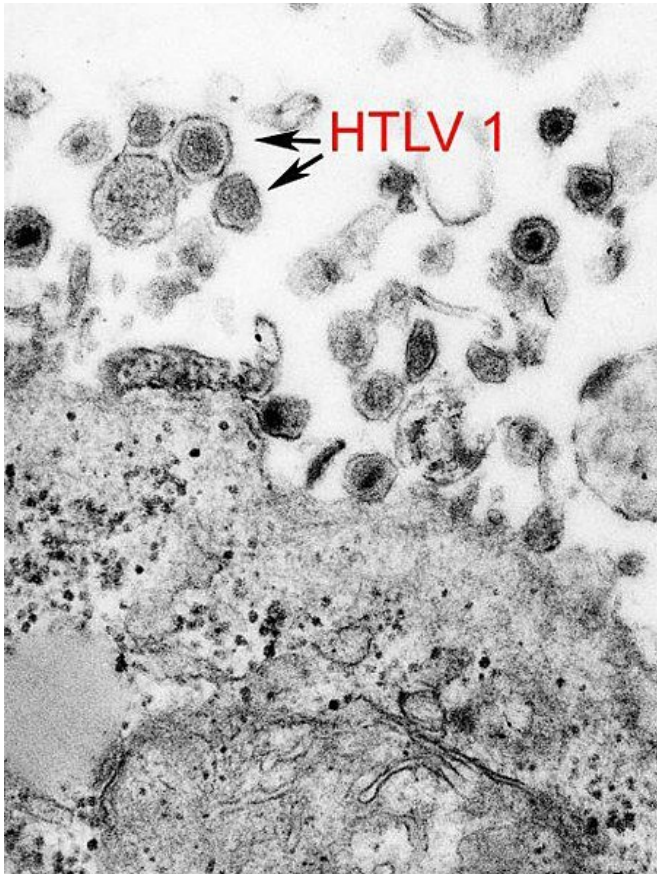


Prevalence of HTLV-1 infection among teens and adults in Gabon remains high

25 October 2018



Credit: CDC, Wikimedia Commons, 2007

A study published in *PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases*, by Mirdad Kazanji, of the Centre International de Recherches Medicales de Franceville in Gabon, and the Institut Pasteur de la Guyane in French Guiana, suggests that 30 years after the first epidemiological survey of the seroprevalence of Human T-cell lymphotropic virus type 1 (HTLV-1) infections in Gabon, the country remains highly endemic, with a seroprevalence of 7.3%.

HTLV-1 infections affect approximately 5 to 10 million people globally and can cause adult T-cell

lymphoma, myelopathy, and a variety of other diseases. Thirty years ago, researchers conducted an [epidemiological study](#) in Gabon, revealing an HTLV-1 infection prevalence of 5%-10.5%. To evaluate current disease distribution, the authors collected blood samples, medical histories, and sociodemographic data from 4,381 participants, aged 15-90 years old, living across all 9 provinces of Gabon over a three-year period. Of the 4,381 people tested, 320 were positive for HTLV-1, contributing to 7.3% prevalence country-wide. Additionally, the authors measured for geographic distribution, behavioral and sociodemographic risk factors that may contribute to [disease](#) transmission.

Importantly, the study did not include children under the age of 15, so further epidemiological research is required to gain a better understanding of transmission and prevalence rate in child populations. According to the authors, the results indicate that, "preventive measures to decrease spread and transmission of this human retrovirus are urgently warranted." Among their recommendations are nationwide sexual health programming, systematic HTLV-1 screening of potential blood donors, and screening and educational outreach among pregnant women to decrease risk of mother-child [transmission](#).

More information: Caron M, Besson G, Padilla C, Makuwa M, Nkoghe D, et al. (2018) Revisiting human T-cell lymphotropic virus types 1 and 2 infections among rural population in Gabon, central Africa thirty years after the first analysis. *PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases* 12(10): e0006833. doi.org/10.1371/journal.pntd.0006833

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