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## Predictors of health-seeking behavior: HIV test experiences among youth aged 15-24 in Cameroon and Gabon

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**Background:** HIV testing plays a vital role in the prevention and reduction of the HIV epidemic and is a critical measure for HIV prevention programs and services. However, reports from Cameroon and Gabon indicated low HIV testing and lack of information about the predicting factors of HIV testing. Therefore, the aims of this study were to investigate the HIV testing experiences and to explore its predicting factors among 15-24 aged Cameroonian and Gabonese youth.

**Methodology:** This study used nationally representative datasets from Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) of Cameroon (2011) and Gabon (2012). A total of 14,880 youth of which 9511(63.91%) from Cameroon and 5369(36.08%) from Gabon were taken. Binary multivariate logistic regression was used to investigate the associates of HIV testing using SPSS version 22.

**Results:** Above 14% of Cameroonian and 19% of Gabonese youth did not know where to get HIV test. In Cameroon 23.1% and in Gabon 41.6% of youth where tested for HIV in their life time. Only 11.7% of Cameroonian and 25.9% of Gabonese youth were tested for HIV in the last 12 months.

Most of the youth tested for HIV in the last 12 months were received results of their HIV test. Even though such data was not available in the DHS data of Gabon, the main reasons for HIV test among Cameroonian youth were asked for the test, offered and accepted, and required. Variables that showed statistically significant association with HIV test and receiving HIV test results were: Age, type of residence, educational level, religion, marital status, wealth index, occupation, comprehensive knowledge and acceptance attitude. Cameroonian and Gabonese male youth were less likely to know place to get HIV test, to be tested for HIV, tested and received HIV test results than their female counterparts.

**Conclusion:** Life time and in the last 12 months HIV test experiences among Cameroonian and Gabonese youth are very low and even significant proportion of the youth do not know where to get HIV test. Hence, both countries need to implement strategies targeting those younger, male, unmarried, not educated and economically disadvantaged youth to increase their motivation and awareness towards HIV testing.

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