Aids In Africa Essay, Research Paper

A Brief History Of AID S

Throughout time there have been many things that have hurt the human race

severely. Natural disasters, cancer, famine, and many other dreadful problems.

However, what has and still is harming the entire human race the most, is the AIDS virus.

The fact that it can spread so quickly and can not be detected very easily is why this is

such an issue. One of the places that this virus has hit the hardest is on the continent of

Africa. Africa is so poor, and was so unprepared for this disease, the death rate from this

disease is at an all time high.

The AIDS virus, or Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, is a fatal disease

that has is believed to have come from Africa. It was first diagnosed in Africa and the

United States in the early 1970 s. The slow forming part of the disease, called HIV, or

Human Immunodeficiency Virus, spread across the globe throughout the 1980 s.

Another place that the virus was identified was in the United States and France among

homosexuals. The patterns and different ways that this disease can spread have changed

over the last 25 years and is becoming a larger threat every day. (1.)

The actual disease HIV, causes immune system damage. It is spread from blood

to blood, sexual intercourse, bodily fluids, and from mother to child. About seventy

percent of AIDS has been transmitted from sexual intercourse when people do not use

condoms. Two other ways in that the AIDS virus is transmitted is between syringes, and

also from unscreened blood transfusions. Some cases have also shown that breast milk

has also been infected with the AIDS virus and can be directly passed from mother to

child. Some of the places that the AIDS virus can be found devastating is in third world

countries. Countries with poor economies and infrastructures can not handle the burden

of this new and deadly disease. Along with AIDS comes a laundry list of new and very

important precautions and new expenditures that must be taken care of in order to

combat the virus.

Current Events Of The AID S Virus In Africa

Today s Africa is the most infected place on the planted. The AID S virus has

taken its toll here, and Africa is still feeling its wrath. Out of every ten people, one

person has AID S in southern Africa. The AID S virus has become more and more

dominant in Africa in the past few years for a few reasons. The main reason that the

virus is doing so well and keeps on prospering is because of the promiscuity and

ignorance of people in Africa. The African people are not well educated in safe sex, and

will never be unless there is more available information. Another key factor in the

spreading of the AID S virus in Africa is poverty and the inability to buy new virus

combating drugs.

Recently, the United States has joined the AID S prevention team with Africa.

On July 20, 2000, the United States offered about $ 1 billion dollars to sub-Saharan

Africa. This money may be used to buy AID S related drugs and other materials from

United States firms. Today, about 300 million dollars a year is being spent to help fight

and prevent the AID S virus. In recent United Nation studies it is shown that about 3

billion dollars a year is needed to make any sort of positive impact. (3.)

Africa continues to dwarf the rest of the world on the AIDS balance sheet.

(7.)-Meaning that because Africa has so many people with AIDS, it makes all other

countries look as if they are much better off than they really are. According to many

sources like UNAIDS and WHO, which are national AIDS prevention groups, more than

7 out of 10 newly affected people in 1998 live in Africa. Children under the age of 15

make up most of these new statistics because they are born with the virus. Since the

epidemic has started, more than 83% of the causalities have taken place in sub-Saharan

Africa and only one-tenth of the worlds population lives in Africa south of the Sahara.

The raw numbers of people infected with the AIDS virus in Africa is astounding.

Since the very beginning of the virus, about 34 million people in Africa have been

infected with the virus. An estimated 11.5 million have already died and about

one-fourth of them have been children. At the end of 1998 the AIDS virus was

responsible for about two million funerals in Africa.

Today the Legislation Summary from the 106th congress, a new founded congress

that focus on finding cures and helping the check mate like posistion of Africa dealing

with the AIDS virus. The overall rate of infection of the continent of Africa is about

8.8% while there is a 1.1% infection rate in every other country.

In a report by the groups UNAIDS, and the United Nations, the HIV virus in the

region of sub-Saharan Africa, has more than 10% of the worlds population, and more

than 70% of the worlds infected people. The group UNAIDS predicts that more than half

of all 15 year olds will most likely die in the next few years. The only way to make these

predictions false is if the risk of becoming infected by the disease is reduced. Some of

the countries where this could take place are ones such as Zambia, South Africa, and

Botswana. These are the countries that are at the highest infection rate. (2.)

In sub-Saharan Africa, the rate of infection of women is greater than men.

Though most of the disease is spread through heterosexual contact, today in urban areas

intravenous drug use is becoming more popular so the spread of the disease by needles is

also on the rise. According to the statistics taken by UNAIDS in 1999 about 53% of the

women in sub-Saharan Africa are infected with the AIDS virus. The risk that young

women have in contracting the disease is much greater than women in there elder years.

A study found that women between the ages of 15-19 are infected at the rate of 15%-25%

while the infection rate for boys the same age is 3%-4%. The risk of contracting AIDS is

on the rise. In 1999 there were 2 million deaths, and in the year 2000 there were 2.4

million deaths, so it is quite obvious that the mortality rate is rising. (5.)

Most experts believe that the main reason that the AIDS virus has taken root so

easily and is not being moved is because of the widespread poverty in Africa. The health

facilities in Africa are not equipped with any real technology and are not exceptionally

sanitary. There is no real procedures in African health facilities that can diagnose, treat,

or prevent the AIDS virus.

Many women in Africa have become commercial sex workers, also known as

prostitutes, a profession which increases their chances of infection. Because of the AIDS

virus, many of Africa s teachers and other skilled workers are dying. This is depriving

the children of Africa of any sort of future.

The estimated number of African AIDS orphans is rising to about 6.5 million.

These AIDS orphans face the problems of malnutrition, finding some sort of education,

and just fighting to stay alive without any parents or relatives. AIDS orphans are

expected to rise to a number of about 15 million by the year 2010. A total of about 12.1

million African sub-Saharan children have lost either their mother, father, or both due to

the AIDS virus dubbing them the AIDS orphans. (8.)

- A graph illustrating the mother child transmission of HIV.

Effects of AIDS/HIV On The South African Economy

In the last year, African president, Thabo Mbeki, was confronted by a congress of

South African Trade Unions. What was challenged was his strategy to combat Aids, and

his economic game plan for the future while keeping AIDS and its threat in mind.

Mbeki s present economic plans so far have failed to hit any of its target areas. Some of

his plans included boosting growth by lowering inflation, interest rates, and deficit

spending. Instead of these promised plans, Africa has suffered massive job losses, a

stunted economic trend, and descending industries.

The other part of the economy of Africa that is being affected by AIDS is the

Gross Domestic Product. As of right now, 2% of the spending for some sort of combat or

vaccine for AIDS has already exceeded the GDP. In the future it is expected to be at

17% in the year 2010. Another drawback of this disease in Africa is that it will take

about 20 billion dollars out of the United States economy. In Botswana Africa, about

20% will be taken from the government budget, and the people who are most poor in

Botswana will loose about 13% of their already low earnings. (12.)

In Africa, at least 85% of its population survives on less than one dollar a

day. This evidence suggests that Africa was better off 35 or 40 years ago when it gained

its independence. In those countries of the sub-Saharan Africa, who are being affected

the most by the AIDS virus, they will loose about 15-20% of their national wealth.

Other problems that are harming Africa within the boundaries of the economy all

come from the fact that Africa is not in any posistion to make commercial agreements

with countries to help with the battle against AIDS. Africa for the last twenty years has

been more interested in paying off debts rather than health care. Debt repayments and no

social health care is sub-Saharan Africa s target right now. Africa is the most in-debt

country in the world, and will continue to be if they do not put forth more effort to

prevent, diagnose, and treat AIDS.

An important problem that are plaguing Africa because of the AIDS virus is the

amount of laborers that are dying each day. The continent of Africa contains 71% of the

worlds entire AIDS population. Seventy-one percent of the population in Africa has

AIDS/HIV, this means that eventually about 50-65% of these people will die. This is

what is going to be the hardest on the economy because of the fact that about 30% of

these people do have jobs are almost un-replacable. The reason that they are almost

un-replacable is because so many Africans are not skilled at anything. The percentage of

Africans that are skilled laborers and/or workers is about 25-40%. So, the African labor

industry in the near future is going to be hit hard with severe job losses. (6.)

The entire continent of Africa now realizes that AIDS is a economic as well as a

social problem as well. The economic consequences are not merely limited to a

reduction in public health budgets but affects the whole economic sphere because it

directly threatens those who are in the productive age group. A weakened economy

contributes to the health status of the population. Aids makes impacts on a few

different levels of the economy which include: 1.) Reduced savings and investments. 2.)

Lost production 3.) Lost labor 4.) High health care costs 5.) Reduced returns on

investments in health and education.

The reason that AIDS will affect the savings and investments is because it will

make things move from savings and investments to health care. It will lower the

domestic capitol formation, which in turn will make the economic growth in the future

stunted. AIDS looses labor and production because when a skilled worker or laborer is

ill during his prime working years, all of his earnings are lost to the economy. When

AIDS investments move from education to health care, the economy will suffer many

negative end products. The other economic consequences are noticeable at agricultural,

household, and company levels.

In the long run, AIDS will hit the poor the hardest. Richer people will be

more receptive to education campaigns through the mass media, will be more prone to

purchase condoms, and more likely to live in environments that encourage condom use.

AIDS will worsen the poverty of the poor by depriving them of their only productive

resource: their labor. With their poor health status, inability to buy condoms, and lack

of access to information campaigns, AIDS looks like it will kill many before its tenure in

Africa is over. (9.)

Is There A Cure For The AIDS Virus In Africa?

The final answer to the question as to whether or not there is a cure to the

AIDS/HIV epidemic that is running rampant through Africa is NO. There is no proven

cure the AIDS virus, or to HIV. Doctors and scientists have made very little leighway in

the area of these two virus . These two sickness are always changing and move too fast

for scientists to make any sort of cure for it. It has too many different angles that need to

be approached in order for a cure to be devised. However, there have been a few

breakthroughs in which slow down the virus . One of these new break throughs is called

Bactrim. (11.)

Bactrim has been proven to reduce the secondary infections of AIDS. A cost of

about eight dollars a year is what this three drug cocktail would cost. This amount is

quite small compared to the millions of dollars per year that is spent on a cure for AIDS.

The African government and health care officials should see this new drug as a blessing.

It is not a cure but it is a preventative drug which may help make many African lives

longer. This is almost a dream come true because now, the laborers can work more, and

the economy may not be destroyed. However, this new drug has not been tested in

Africa, rather, only in the United States.

This new drug does not help the immune system in anyway, nor does any of the

new medications that are made to help make lives longer. It is inevitable that AIDS

victims will die of some sort of intricacy from the AIDS virus. These new drugs will

only prolong these poor victims death sentences for either weeks, months, or possibly

years. Africa has the most health care needs of any other continent in the world. These

new drugs will ease the pain of many, but it does not mean that the long hard search for a

cure should cease. Until that is found, the battle will continue on the AIDS virus in

Africa. (8.)

The Final Answer

African and sub-Saharan Africa are in dire need of answers to their new and

common enemy: AIDS. AIDS will most likely ravage through Africa killing millions

more before any real cure is found. The most important thing that Africans can do is

plain and simple, become more educated. The United States, and other nations can only

do so much in order to help Africa. (7.)

Another important factor of this horrible plague that is sweeping Africa is that it

must be dealt with head on. There can be no more denial about the AIDS virus because

it is quite evident that it is there and it is not going anywhere soon. In a country where

1,700 people contract AIDS/HIV each day, it is obvious that something has to be done.

There are two simple answers that can help stop some of the spread of AIDS/HIV. The

two most important ways that it can be stifened are by using condoms, and becoming

more educated.

Even though the entire African situation seems as if there is no hope and no end is

in sight, there are things that can be done to help. Finally, the African government has

turned around and began to recognize the presence of the AIDS virus. Some of the things

that have been done include a $80 million dollar campaign and fund raising opportunity

formed by former president Nelson Mandela. Some of the aspects of this newly formed

campaign will include education, condoms, and fund raising and monetary distribution.

The South African president, Thabo Mbeki, in the past has turned his back on his

country, however, recently he has noticed how horrendous the AIDS virus really is. In a

quote he says, For too long we have closed our eyes as a nation…….We face the danger

that half of our youth will not reach adulthood. Mbeki knows that in the future,

devastation will come before any answers or happiness. Our dreams as a people will

soon be shattered…….There is no other moment than the present to take any action….The

time is now. With all of the continent of Africa aware and awake to the problems that

the AIDS/HIV is presenting hopefully changes will be made. However, it is up to the

health care officials, government, and African citizens to make any sort of transformation

into a healthier, and more aware people. It will be a difficult transition for everyone, but

it can be done. (10.)