Aids Essay, Research Paper

A social problem is defined as a negative interaction between groups in society. The social problem most likely effects more than one group of people. Most problems bring upon havoc or cause lack of cooperation in solving the problem. Social problems also prevent groups from growing and improving, thus making the problem worse. A most recent social problem that became an epidemic in the early 80 s is AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). AIDS originated from HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) which is a specific group of diseases or conditions that result from suppression of the immune system. A person infected with HIV gradually loses immune function along with certain immune cells, called CD4 T-lymphocytes or CD4 T-cells, causing the infected person to become vulnerable to pneumonia, fungus infections, or other common ailments. With the loss of immune function, a clinical syndrome (a group of various illnesses that together characterize a disease) develops over time and eventually results in death due to opportunistic infections (infections by organisms that do not normally cause disease except in persons whose immune system has been greatly weakened) or cancers.

AIDS is a social problem because it s a disease that doesn t have a cure. AIDS effects all communities and social groups, making the disease a worldwide problem. More than any other groups of people, homosexual men find AIDS the most important social problem. Since some of the first AIDS cases were found in homosexual men, many groups blame them for spreading the disease. Since AIDS is found in any race, sex, age, or sexual preference; any person is vulnerable to the disease.

The only cause of AIDS is HIV. HIV can be spread by the exchange of body fluids, primarily semen, blood, and blood products. Another major spread of HIV is caused by sexual contact with an infected person. The virus is present in the sexual secretions of infected men and women and gains access to the bloodstream of the uninfected person by way of small abrasions that may occur as a consequence of sexual intercourse. HIV can also be spread by the sharing of needles or syringes that results in direct exposure to the blood of an infected individual. This method of exposure occurs most commonly among people abusing intravenous (IV) drugs. HIV transmission through blood transfusions or use of blood-clotting factors is now extremely rare because of extensive screening of the blood supply. A more recent cause of HIV is from an infected mother to her baby, either before or during childbirth or through breast-feeding.

The effects of AIDS vary on the type of person effected. For children, AIDS is usually something given to them, which they are helpless against. Drug users that get AIDS may blame others for giving them the disease. The users that are infected usually aren t aware of the disease until it s too late for them to be properly treated. People that get AIDS from having more than one sexual partner effect the life of every person they sleep with. Mothers who are pregnant with AIDS may pass the disease on to their child without them being able to do anything about it. No matter how a person gets the disease their chances of dying are 100%. Family and friends of AIDS patients are effected because they have to see that person go through the disease. In the long run, there is no easy way to deal with AIDS; the burden is something people have to cope with in their own way.

Remedies of AIDS are very limited since there isn t a cure for the disease. Treatment for AIDS is given only to slow the disease from spreading rapidly. One major drug called AZT has been highly effective in reducing HIV transmission. The most effective method of preventing HIV and AIDS is education. Parents and schools make the students aware of the disease at an early age so they are at a lower risk. Education and the use of certain drugs have reduced the amount of people who get the disease and die with the disease, but that s not enough. In just one year the amount of people who are infected with HIV has risen 10 percent.

AIDS is a social problem that everyone would like to get rid of. The disease is painful emotionally and physically both for the patient and their family. For the disease to be kept under control, massive campaigns and cooperation are needed to spread the education of AIDS to all countries. The commitment and resources needed to create such a project has been a problem since some people don t want to be part of such a dangerous epidemic. Until a cure or something used to prevent AIDS is discovered, the number of HIV infections will continue to rise. All people must learn how to protect themselves and remember it s what a person does, not who a person is, that increases their risk of getting HIV.