Aids Virus Essay, Research Paper

THE AIDS VIRUS

Being one of the most fatal viruses in the nation, AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) is now a serious public health concern in most major U.S. cities and in countries worldwide. Since 1986 there have been impressive advances in understanding of the AIDS virus, its mechanisms, and its routes of transmission. Even though researchers have put in countless hours, and millions of dollars it has not led to a drug that can cure infection with the virus or to a vaccine that can prevent it. With AIDS being the leading cause of death among adults, individuals are now taking more precautions with sexual intercourse, and medical facilities are screening blood more thoroughly. Even though HIV ( Human Immunodeficiency Virus) can be transmitted through sharing of non sterilize needles and syringes, sexual intercourse, blood transfusion, and through most bodily fluids, it is not transmitted through casual contact or by biting or blood sucking insects.

The first case of AIDS were reported in 1982, epidemiologists at the Center of Disease Control immediately began tracking the disease back wards in time as well as forward. They determined that the first cases of AIDS in the United States probably occurred in 1977.

By early 1982, 15 states, the District of Columbia, and 2 foreign countries had reports of AIDS cases, however the total remained low: 158 men and 1 woman. Surprising enough more then 90 percent of the men were homosexual or bisexual. Knowing this more then 70 percent of AIDS victims are homosexual or bisexual men, and less then 5 percent are heterosexual adults. Amazing enough by December of 1983 there were 3,000 cases of AIDS that had been reported in adults from 42 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, and the disease had been recognized in 20 other countries. The health of the general homosexual populations in the area with the largest number of cases of the new disease was getting looked at a lot closer by researchers. For many years physicians knew that homosexual men who reported large numbers of sexual partners had more episodes of venereal diseases and were at higher risk of hepatitis B virus infection than the rest of the population, but coincidentally with the appearance of AIDS,. other debilitating problems began to do appear more frequently. The most common was swollen glands, often accompanied by extreme fatigue, weight loss, fever, chronic diarrhea, decreased levels of blood platelets and fungal infections in the mouth. This condition was labeled ARC (AIDS Related complex).

The isolation of HIV in 1983 and 1984 and the development of techniques to produce large quantities of the virus [paved the way for a battery of tests to determined the relationship between AIDS and ARC and the magnitude of the carrier problem. Using several different laboratory tests, scientists looked for antibodies against the HIV in the blood of AIDS and ARC patients. They found that almost 100 percent of those with AIDS or ARC had the antibodies-they were seriopostive. In contrast less then one percent of persons with no known risk factors were seriopostive.

AIDS is defined as a disease, at least moderately predictive of defects in cell- meditated immunity, occurring in a person with no known cause for diminished resistance to that disease. Such diseases include Kaposi’s Sarcoma, Pneumocystis carnii pneumonia, and serious other opportunistic infections. After the discovery of HIV and the development of HIV-antibody test, the case definition of AIDS was updated to reflect the role of the virus in causing AIDS, but the scope of the definition remained almost the same.

HIV is primarily a sexually transmitted disease, it is transmitted by both homosexual and bisexual and heterosexual activity. The first recognized case was among homosexual and bisexual men. Many numbers of studies have shown that men who have sexual partners and those who practice receptive anal intercourse are more likely to be infected with HIV than other homosexual men. Researchers found a strong connectio