Aids Essay, Research Paper

AIDS

AIDS is short for: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. It is a serious condition in which the body+s defenses against some illnesses are broken down. People with AIDS develop many different kinds of diseases which the body would usually fight off quite easily. AIDS is caused by a virus called HIV, which is short for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. HIV can be passed on because it would be present in the sexual fluids and blood of infected people. If infected blood or sexual fluid gets into your blood, then you will become infected. If a man with HIV has vaginal intercourse without a condom, infected fluid could pass into the woman+s blood stream through a tiny cut or sore inside her body. This can be so small that you don+t know about it. If a couple has anal intercourse the risk of infection is far greater.

HIV can also be passed on by sharing equipment used to inject drugs. Blood can remain on needles and syringes. If you share, and a person infected with HIV used the needle first, the virus can be injected directly into your blood.

Some people think that AIDS is something that other people need to worry about like, gays, drug users, and people who sleep around. These ideas are mistaken. All young people need to take the threat of HIV seriously. The most effective way of fighting this deadly virus is to be educated about the disease and avoid activities which are risky.

During the past decade , more than 400,000 individuals in the United States have been diagnosed with AIDS. Officials from the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that the number of deaths from AIDS in the U.S. has dropped by a record 47 percent. Officials attributed the reduction to an extremely effective combination drug treatment that allows people infected with HIV to live longer and healthier lives. Unfortunately, no such decline occurred in the number of new HIV infections in the United States. The infection rate remained at about 40,000 new cases a year.

Although the U.S. has a great deal of AIDS cases, it doesn+t even come close to the numbers of cases that are in Africa. Of the 30 million people worldwide with AIDS, 21 million live in Africa. More than 16 percent of South Africa+s 40 million people are infected with the HIV virus. The infection level among South Africans between the ages of 20 and 30 already is approaching 20 percent. New infections are being reported at a rate of 1,500 a day — two-thirds of them among 15 to 20 year-olds. Health experts say this means that the age group once thought to be the most receptive to AIDS awareness messages already is heavily infected. Although HIV is running rampant in South Africa, too many people here do not understand or believe how deadly it is until it is too late.

Since late last year, the government has made AIDS prevention a high-profile priority, and last week President Nelson Mandela spoke about the AIDS crisis in his state of the nation address. Some people believe only the prostitutes get AIDS. Some men glorify the virtues of fat women in the mistaken belief that only thin women can transmit AIDS. Some women believe that AIDS can be gotten rid of by giving it back to the source of the infection. HIV has infected more than 16 percent of South Africans and may create as many as 2 million orphans by 2010. Polygamy, cultural morals, and a lack of education make the fatal disease particularly hard to control.

In closing, it is clear that AIDS will persist. Millions more are likely to become infected with HIV, and many, if not all, are likely to die of the disease unless effective treatments or a cure is found. Until this happens, the most effective way of fighting this deadly virus is education about its spread, and preventive ways to shorten the epidemic