Aids Funding..Too Much Or Too Little? Essay, Research Paper

Each author explains their views on the AIDS debate; they discuss the importance of AIDS research, the numbers of AIDS patients and their cost, and benefits of research to other fields. Freundlich and Fumento agree that it is important to study AIDS, because it is a threat to young and old alike, opposed to cancer and heart disease being mainly targeted at older people. But Fumento thinks that AIDS spending should be realistic, not just tailored to fit the needs of protesters and demanding organizations, simply to keep them quiet. They also both agree that AIDS is a new and upcoming epidemic that is becoming more of a problem with each passing year. Each realizes that the disease is no longer only confined to drug users and homosexuals. Thurman states that, “Frequently they are in poverty and have abusive relationships, and often have mental problems on to of that-the list goes on and on. So our clients today are much more complicated to treat” (Thurman 1). However, they do not agree on its importance compared to other diseases and medical problems in the United States. I feel that AIDS is a very important disease to be worrying about in today’s society, because it is hurting all ages not just the older groups of people.

Fumento makes a point of explaining how heart disease and cancer consume more lives on average in a year than AIDS ever has. He states that “AIDS cases diagnosed would be but a fourth of all 1993 cancer deaths”, heart disease would be even more than that, yet heart disease funding is only two-thirds of that of AIDS (529). Fumento also points out that cancer and heart disease pose a far greater health threat than AIDS. “Heart disease kills over 750,000 Americans a year”(529). Freundlich, on the other hand, says that AIDS is far too unstable to be neglected. She states that even though the death count of heart disease and cancer are very high, they are extremely predictable and have leveled out year after year because of current medical technology. The death count of AIDS, however, is almost never the same each year; some years it may be low, and others very high. This causes researchers to question if they are making decent progress in the AIDS field. At the rate of which AIDS is spreading, “in the next decade alone, doctors will be treating a million or more people who are already infected with HIV, the disease which leads to AIDS”(Freundlich 534). Thurman says that “The rate of AIDS death is decreasing dramatically, which simply means that we’re going to have more sick people.”(Thurman 1) This shows that AIDS is still a problem, and people are going to think that because people are not dying from AIDS itself, then the problem is over. I think that even though the death counts of heart disease and cancers are larger, it still effects people that are coming to the end of an average life span anyway. AIDS on the other hand, is killing people that still have her or his whole life left to live. I think they shouldn’t worry about how many its killing, but whom it’s killing.

Death count is not the only thing to worry about in this issue, but the loss of researchers from other fields is taken into consideration as well. Let’s face it-there are not enough people qualified to study medicine and disease, or this whole issue would not be a problem. Fumento explains that the number of scientists and researchers used in AIDS research is far too large, and to fill that quota researchers are taken from other fields, like heart disease and cancer, and put them into the AIDS field. This once again leaves other things short handed, while AIDS gets whatever it needs. Also, he points out that the ratio of patient cost alone is extremely out of proportion to other diseases. For example, “cancer and heart disease expenditures will be equal to under 5 percent of patient cost, and AIDS research funding will be about 230 percent greater than patient costs this year”(Fumento 530). This basically means that they are spending a great deal of unnecessary money on AIDS. Freundlich, on the other hand, says that not only does the added AIDS research help AIDS patients and technology, but also provides valuable benefits in public health, epidemiology, and basic science. AIDS research helps us learn about the body’s immune system, which plays an important part in cancer treatment. I agree with Freundlich here, but the extremely large amount that is spent is not necessary, and could be toned down a little.

So why not balance the money evenly so everyone gets her or his own equal share? Well, it’s not that simple; first of all, there is not enough money to go around to maintain all of the current studies in each field. Secondly, Freundlich mentions that William F. Raub, director or the NIH, says that the money may not go where it will be evenly distributed if it is re-allocated; the government may put the money to another use altogether (Freundlich 535). Both Freundlich and Fumento agree that there is not enough money spent on health care in the first place, and research is becoming more and more expensive. Thurman, however, says that Congress is doing the best it can to keep money going to where it is needed most, but with AIDS being only one third in the United States, it is hard to keep track of what is needed worldwide. (Thurman 1) I feel that both Freundlich and Fumento are trying to blame government spending on small funding for disease, but I have to side with Thurman. The government has more to worry about that a couple of diseases that we know a great deal about and a new one that we are slowly taking control of. Plus, even if we do get it under control here, it doesn’t stop the rest of the world from battling the epidemic.

All in all, each writer brings up good points defending their argument. AIDS is an important topic and should not be looked over, but it should not be blown out of proportion, as Fumento believes. Money, research, and death counts are all very important subjects to be considered when discussing federal budgeting for medical research. Scientists should be prepared however, for new and upcoming diseases such as AIDS, so our society does not have to face another deadly epidemic like we had to do so long ago when there was not much medical research.

I believe that each author has provided sufficient evidence to pursuade a reader to side with her or his view, however I feel that Fumento is correct that AIDS research is slightly out of control and needs to be somewhat tamed. Although Fumento thinks that the money needs to be spent on research to heart disease and cancer, I feel that heart disease and cancer should not be so heavily studied as much as we used to. We already have many new technologies to fight these diseases. I think that diseases such as these, which come into people during the later years, are just nature’s way of renewing life, just like the savanna fires in Africa. Instead of focusing on keeping the older alive longer, we should try to keep the younger healthier. Because lets face it, as much as we want it, people will never live forever.

Bibliography

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