

AIDS

My issue isn't hilarious at all, actually it is sad that I have to talk to you about it. AIDS is a modern disease and it is spread its roots all over the world. It is very annoying once you have had it because there is no cure that could heal the infected people. At least not yet. But maybe some day we will find a cure that will save the following generations. It has killed millions of people so far, that's why it is also called the black death or the plague of the 21. century.

First I am going to tell you a few things about AIDS' history and how it was found. **The roots of the disease** come from Haiti, US and Africa, and were first found back in 1977. This disease was officially named AIDS later in 1982 and it means Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. The common diseases are also rare types of pneumonia and cancer, because they are a threat to immune system too.

We mustn't mix up the initials HIV and AIDS. HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus and subsequently leads to AIDS. The HIV "crossed over" into human population from a particular species of chimpanzee, probably through blood contact and field dressing of the animals.

How long does it take for HIV to become AIDS? Well currently the average time is 8 – 11 years. This time varies greatly from person to person and can depend on many factors (especially person's health status and behaviours). Today medical treatments can slow down the rate at which HIV weakens the immune system. Of course AIDS and HIV isn't the only existing sexual transmitted disease, there are also Syphilis, Gonorrhoea, Herpes Simplex, Pelvic Inflammatory Disease.

What happens with HIV inside our body? HIV is a retrovirus. A retrovirus is a type of viruses that has a special chemicals that help to change RNA into DNA, and help the virus to attack the body cells. HIV infects people with blood contact, semen, vaginal secretions and breast milk. Activities that allow HIV transmission are unprotected sexual contacts like sexual intercourse and oral sex, direct blood contact with the infected person, injection of drug needles, blood transfusions and mother to a baby. Of course you can't get AIDS from kissing, tears, sweat (drops of liquid that appear on the surface of your skin when you are hot), faeces (the waste liquid that leaves the body through the anus), urine, saliva (the liquid in your mouth that helps you to swallow the food), shaking hands, hugging, using a toilet, drinking from the same glass, sneezing or coughing.

The biggest problem with AIDS is the fact you can't really know that you have it, not until it is too late. Infected people are more vulnerable and exposed to other diseases.

Now lets look the statistics for a while:

- there are 36,1 million people living with AIDS (34,1 million adults and 1,4 million children under 15),
- so far the AIDS has killed 21,8 million people (17,5 million adults and 4,3 million children under 15),

- in year 2000 AIDS infected 5,3 million people and killed 3 million people,
- in USA: 800 000 – 900 000 living with AIDS, in 2000 448 060 people died,
- in Slovenia we have more than 200 known cases of AIDS.

Sex is an important part of human's life and it's not exactly optimistic, that we have connect sex with death. AIDS is spreading irresistible, and the experiences show that nothing changes the individuals until they are infected themselves. AIDS is among us. All those victims are just a warning. ***Open your eyes widely tomorrow might be too late. Don't die of ignorance!***

What is the difference between HIV and AIDS?

HIV is a virus that causes AIDS

H – Human: because this virus can only infect human beings.

I – Immunodeficiency: because the effect of the virus is to create a deficiency, a failure to work properly, within the body's immune system.

V – Virus: because this organism is a virus, which means one of its characteristics is that it is incapable of reproducing by itself. It reproduces by taking over the machinery of the human cell.

A – Acquired: because it's a condition one must acquire or get infected with, not something transmitted through the genes.

I – Immune: because it affects the body's immune system, the part of the body which usually works to fight off germs such as bacteria and viruses.

D – Deficiency: because it makes the immune system deficient (makes it not work properly)

S – Syndrome: because someone with AIDS may experience a wide range of different diseases and opportunistic infections.

(Source: Centres for Disease Control - CDC)

New words:

Issue – topic of the discussion

Disease – an illness affecting humans, animals or plants, often caused by infection

Cure – something to make a person or an animal healthy again after an illness

Pneumonia – a serious illness affecting one or both lungs that makes breathing difficult

Treatments – something that is done to cure an illness or injury, or to make somebody look and feel good

Vaginal secretions – a liquid substance produced inside vaginal section

Sexual intercourse – the physical activity of sex, usually describing an act

Sweat – drops of liquid that appear on the surface of your skin when you are hot

Faeces – the waste liquid that leaves the body through the anus

Saliva – the liquid in your mouth that helps you to swallow the food

Vulnerable – weak and easily hurt

Victim – a person who has been attacked, injured or killed as the result of a crime, a disease, an accident, etc.