

AIDS and its socio-economic impact



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Diganta Talukdar 16 July 2008 30659 views

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS or Aids) is a collection of symptoms and infections in humans resulting from the specific damage to the immune system caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). The late stage of the condition leaves individuals prone to opportunistic infections and tumors. Although treatments exist to slow the virus's progression, there is no such known cure. It's a threat to mankind. HIV is transmitted through direct contact of a mucous membrane or the bloodstream with a bodily fluid containing HIV, such as blood, semen, vaginal fluid, preseminal fluid, and breast milk. This transmission can come in the form of anal, vaginal or oral sex, blood transfusion, contaminated hypodermic needles, exchange between mother and baby during pregnancy, childbirth, or breastfeeding, or other exposure to one of the above bodily fluids.

The symptoms of AIDS are primarily the result of conditions that do not normally develop in individuals with healthy immune systems. Most of these conditions are infections caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites that are normally controlled by the elements of the immune system that HIV damages. Opportunistic infections are common in people with AIDS. HIV affects nearly every organ system. People with AIDS also have an increased risk of developing various cancers such as Kaposi's sarcoma, cervical cancer and cancers of the immune system known as lymphomas.

UNAIDS and the WHO estimate that AIDS has killed more than 25 million people since it was first recognized in 1981, making it one of the most destructive epidemics in recorded history. Despite recent, improved access to antiretroviral treatment and care in many regions of the world, the AIDS epidemic claimed an estimated 2.8 million (between 2.4 and 3.3 million) lives in 2005 of which more than half a million (570,000) were children.

Globally, between 33.4 and 45 million people currently live with HIV. In 2005, between 3.4 and 6.2 million people were newly infected and between 2.4 and 3.3 million people with AIDS died, an increase from 2003 and the highest number since 1981.

Socio-economic Impact

The impact of AIDS is still not fully understood, particularly when the long term is considered. The epidemic comes in successive waves, with the first wave being HIV infection, followed several years later by a wave of opportunistic diseases, and later still by a wave of AIDS illness and then death.

In the approximately 27 years since AIDS emerged as a major health emergency, the epidemic has had a serious, and in many places devastating, effect on human development. In some countries, AIDS is undermining progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, particularly those related to poverty reduction, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality, reducing child mortality and improving the health of mothers .

HIV and AIDS retard economic growth by destroying human capital. These range from a plateau and eventual decline in deaths beginning around 2012 to a catastrophic continual growth in the death rate with potentially 90 million cases of infection.

Without proper nutrition, health care and medicine that is available in developed countries, large numbers of people in these countries are falling victim to AIDS. They will not only be unable to work, but will also require significant medical care. The forecast is that this will likely cause a collapse of economies and societies in the regions. In some heavily infected areas, the epidemic has left behind many orphans cared for by elderly grandparents. The increased mortality in this region will result in a smaller skilled population and labor force. This smaller labor force will be predominantly young people, with reduced knowledge and work experience leading to reduced productivity. An increase in workers' time off to look after sick family members or for sick leave will also lower productivity. Increased mortality will also weaken the mechanisms that generate human capital and investment in people, through loss of income and the death of parents. By killing off mainly young adults, AIDS seriously weakens the taxable population, reducing the resources available for public expenditures such as education and health services not related to AIDS resulting in increasing pressure for the state's finances and slower growth of the economy. This results in a slower growth of the tax base, an effect that will be reinforced if there are growing expenditures on treating the sick, training (to replace sick workers), sick pay and caring for AIDS orphans. This is especially true if the sharp increase in adult mortality shifts the responsibility and blame from the family to the government in caring for these orphans.

On the level of the household, AIDS results in both the loss of income and increased spending on healthcare by the household. The income effects of this lead to spending reduction as well as a substitution effect away from education and towards healthcare and funeral spending. It clearly shows that households with an HIV/AIDS patient spent twice as much on medical expenses as other households. It has not only put its effect on economy but the whole social system including education system is adversely effected by this deadly disease.

I want to conclude my discussion here that how it is causing a danger to human society, putting a reverse effect on our society and economy. The more we enters into the topic we will get more and more things to discuss. So we should come forward to fight against this disease to stop its effect on our society.

Image source : <http://www.vergessen-ist-ansteckend.de/>

DigantaTalukdar

BY DIGANTATALUKDAR

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