

Aids in africa: overview

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The pandemic brought about by the Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) in Africa has become a very popular topic among healthcare experts, and interestingly, also among U. S. policymakers. This level of attention is due to the high mortality rate of AIDS victims in the said region as well as the significantly low life-expectancy among those infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) - the pathogen that causes AIDS.

In order to have a broader understanding about the topic four different kinds of literature related to the topic will be used to analyze the impact of the AIDS pandemic in Africa.

Infectious Diseases Epidemiology

The first source that will be analyzed is a reference book entitled, Infectious Diseases Epidemiology: Theory and Practice. This reference books deal with the transmission and control of diseases and it has a section dealing with AIDS/HIV.

The authors were able to fully explain how AIDS is transmitted and also how to control the spread of the virus. There is also a section that describes one of the most ambitious plans to significantly reduce the impact of AIDS/HIV in Africa.

This source is valid and reliable as it is consistent with other sources that will be reviewed later in this study. Aside from that, the publisher, Jones and Bartlett in Massachusetts is a reputable publishing house.

This source provides an overview of the AIDS/HIV problem in general and also provides information why it is very difficult to curb the problem of HIV infection in Africa. The discussion regarding transmission of the HIV virus will

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greatly increase awareness as to the kind of behavior that will lead to infection.

The information that can be gathered through reading this source will help government officials to create strategies and enact laws that will make it harder for the virus to spread.

This source is of great value to individuals, government or non-government agencies desiring to lend support in the fight against AIDS/HIV in Africa.

This is because not only is the source an excellent reference guide for the epidemiology of the disease but it also provides useful information on what is being done to stop the virus from overwhelming the whole continent (Nelson & Masters, p. 869). There is a need to combine knowledge of science and knowledge of how to understand people.

Life Expectancy

The second resource that will be used for this study was taken from an article in The New York Times, entitled, Devastated by AIDS, Africa Sees Life Expectancy Plunge. The article provides a more tangible proof that indeed AIDS/HIV is wreaking havoc in Africa.

It is one thing to simply know about the epidemiology of the disease and it is quite another to learn that infants born in seven African nations - those with very high HIV infection - could not expect to live beyond 40. Due to the catastrophic figures given, some of Africa's politicians are saying that the numbers maybe inaccurate (Dugger, par. 7).

But the report seems to be saying that irregardless of the exact life expectancy number, there is widespread agreement that people are dying young inside the continent.

One of the most information that could be gleaned from this article is the fact that people living in sub-Saharan Africa are not only dying young, their premature deaths increase the level of poverty in this region.

The deaths of thousands of young men and women meant that there will be few people - especially those in the prime of their lives - who can contribute in the field of education, healthcare and various industries. This will cause a chain-reaction of events.

For one there will be no strong and able bodied men and women who can spearhead the drive to eradicate AIDS/HIV and the reason is simple, many of them have died. If Africa continues to suffer from the AIDS/HIV pandemic, then it will not take long before the continent will destroy itself due to people living without hope.

If the children are the future of a nation then surely the AIDS pandemic is creating a bleak future for sub-Saharan Africa.

This is a valid source of information because it came from a reputable source - The New York Times.

Moreover, the information that can be gathered from reading this text supports many of the findings reviewed from other sources. Aside from being accurate, this resource is a valuable source of information because it focuses on falling life expectancy in sub-Saharan Africa. This will help African

politicians as well as their policymakers map out strategies that will help solve the problem.

PEPFAR

The official website of “ The United States President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief” (PEPFAR) will be the third resource for this study. The site offers a wide array of information regarding the AIDS/HIV pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa.

The site talks about the reason behind the creation of PEPFAR and what it hopes to achieve in the long run. PEPFAR is US-based and appears to be one of the most important achievements of the Bush administration. This is a reliable source because it is a website created by the U. S. Federal government.

There are also other U. S. government agencies that acknowledged the significance of PEPFAR and news agencies are also well aware of its existence.

One of the most interesting facts that can be gleaned from the website pertains to the plan of former president George W. Bush to position the United States to lead in the fight against global HIV/AIDS. At the center of the plan is the need to focus resources on a region with one of the highest incidence of AIDS/HIV and this is sub-Saharan Africa.

Aside from the lofty goals set by PEPFAR another interesting facet of this plan is the pledge by the U. S. government, to disburse billions of dollars of taxpayer’s money to help non-Americans, thousands of miles away.

This was a daring move by the former president Bush who insisted that America is ready and financially able, to take a stand against HIV/AIDS. The former president authorized the release of a multi-billion package that will ensure that a significant part of Sub-Saharan Africa will be able to experience outside help. The huge amounts involved will signal to the rest of the world that America is ready.

This resource is valuable not only because it provides an overview of the whole PEPFAR initiative. But aside from that, the website also provides detailed information with regards to the steps required leading to the creation of PEPFAR.

The site also provides links that will help people discover how the president intended to finance a project that is so massive and so expensive that it is almost impossible for this Federal funded program to succeed.

Corruption in Africa

The fourth resource that will be used for this study is a book entitled, Corruption in Africa: Causes, Consequences, and Cleanups. The authors attempted to explain the unique circumstance that created a host of problems for Africa.

Corruption in this side of the world was linked to power-hungry officials who used their position to enrich themselves. When it comes to corruption and the AIDS/HIV pandemic the common denominator is poverty, lack of education and the absence of government services that help worsen the situation in sub-Saharan Africa.

This book is an excellent resource when dealing with factors aside from epidemiology and healthcare. It is very important that policymakers and strategists take a closer look at impact of corruption and why increasing the number of healthworkers and saturating the region with drugs will never be enough to solve the AIDS/HIV pandemic.

The socio-political aspect must be considered as well. There is indeed a clear link between corruption and poverty and when these two are present it creates a social order where the government is inefficient and could not provide the necessary services that in turn will strengthen the capability of Africans to resist the AIDS/HIV onslaught.

This is a reliable resource because it is consistent with research findings used to support the three previous sources. For instance a good education will make it easier for health workers to explain the reason why sexual intercourse and the sharing of contaminated needles are two of the most important means to transmit the virus.

If the people are well-educated then it is easy for them to understand the steps required to avoid those problems. But with corruption comes the inability to have access to good education and when the people are ignorant it will be easy for the virus to spread.