

Aids: impacts escalate from families to the world

[Family](#)



The world always poses innumerable threats to humankind's health and well being. Famine, flood, earthquakes, war, terrorism, epidemics and natural disasters riddle our lives with tragedy. One of the most terrifying of these killers remains silent and unseen even though it may lurk beneath the very skin of those individuals you cherish most.

This terrifying phenomenon has traveled throughout the world and has settled into even the most prosperous nations. Medical advancements, educational programs and government policies have not had success in subduing the spread of this biological executioner. For over three decades, the AIDS virus has run rampant across the globe.

As time goes on we see more infections and fewer solutions to the ongoing problems this virus leaves in its wake. The AIDS virus has caused a great deal of substantial and devastating impacts worldwide. To better understand those impacts, a review of the virus and its capabilities will reveal just what a powerful infection this microorganism causes.

At first, the AIDS virus appears harmless. It does not bring about immediate impending death or even directly harsh and noticeable symptoms. Unlike that of the dreaded avian bird flu virus which killed several people in Asia within a matter of days, the AIDS virus can afflict a body for over a decade before death ensues.

This happens as a result of the immune deficiency that AIDS causes in a body. The virus itself would not bring about mortality, but for the fact that hampers its host's immune system, leaving the person susceptible to contracting other illnesses and disease. Chronic illnesses can last for years,

can reoccur constantly, and finally can destroy the AIDS afflicted individual once their immune system has broken down to the point of no survival.

In this respect unlike other infections AIDS slowly kills its host, and during that slow period of transition can render a person completely incapacitated with other illnesses. This aspect of the disease has just as much impact on the world as the impending deaths that follow.

The AIDS virus transmits itself through contact with body fluids. This means, blood, semen, saliva and other body fluids have the potential to infect others. Unprotected sexual intercourse has most often received the blame for transmission, or perhaps most often gets popular media coverage.

Similarly, AIDS transmission also occurs like wildfire among drug users who contract the virus using contaminated hypodermic needles. Sadly enough, cases in which a mistaken blood transfusion held the virus has also caused infection. AIDS also passes from mother to unborn child. So if the mother incurs the infection prior to giving birth, her child will likely have HIV as well.

Unfortunately the threat of contracting AIDS increasingly impacts the world as lack of funding and education lead to misinformed populations.

While there exist medical treatments for individuals afflicted with AIDS, the treatments only subdue the symptoms of the virus for a time rather than eradicate the illness completely.

The medical world has had considerable trouble controlling the AIDS virus and formulating a vaccine for it because of, “ the ability of a virus to change its genetic structure, which, in turn, changes the very proteins in the envelope that would be targeted by a vaccine.

Exactly why some viruses shift so drastically and the AIDS virus seems to be able to change its colors as fast as the classic chameleon of the viral world, the flu virus -- is unclear" (Langone 150).

As the previous statement explains, the rapidly mutating virus makes it nearly impossible to replicate the correct variables for an effective antibody. This impacts the world leaving the medical field at a loss for answers and people at a loss for cures.

More personally, the AIDS virus impacts families around the world. When men of the family incur the virus, they most likely will unknowingly transmit it to their wives as well. Men, who act as the predominant financial supporters of the household find their health and their ability to provide for their loved ones failing.

When the patriarch cannot work and bring home finances the family may find itself sliding into poverty. Especially if healthcare providers learn of the man's illness and refuses to pay the vastly incremental costs that the malady can accrue over time.

So, as the men of families contract and struggle with the affliction, the rest of the family feels the impact and later as we shall see so does the rest of the world.

Women feel just as much impact from the AIDS virus and possibly more. If their husbands have unknowingly contracted the virus, chances are that wives will then incur the infection from their spouses. In some cases women in this situation may conceive children which will also have the virus upon

birth. Women feel a great impact from the AIDS virus since they act as the primary caregivers of the family.

Time spent at home caring for an ailing husband leaves them unable to find financially productive jobs in the community (" On the Socioeconomic Impact of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic"). Mothers afflicted by the AIDS virus will eventually fade like their husbands, and in doing so leave their unaffected children as orphans. The impact of AIDS in this regard has a devastating impact on the individual families as well as the world.

Similarly, as mentioned above, children can feel the most severe impact of AIDS in their lives. As parents weaken and families fall deeper into poverty, children find themselves without care givers and the basic needs for food, shelter and safety go unfulfilled. If the children have contracted AIDS from their parents upon birth, they too face the impending doom as the virus ravages their immune system.

Over all the effect on children can be seen as, " AIDS is decimating entire generations of productive young adults, while leaving behind a huge cohort of children without parents and adequate community support, vulnerable to exploitation and lacking education and livelihood opportunities" (" On the Socioeconomic Impact of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic"). This impact of AIDS on children has impounding world wide impacts as will later be discussed.

Lastly, elders in the family who have not contracted the AIDS virus also feel the impact as the affliction ravages younger family members. Grandparents must often take in their orphaned grandchildren. If the elders have lost their

health and capabilities, they often depend on the help and financial support of their children.

With AIDS destroying their offspring, it also destroys their caregivers and financial support for health and medical needs as well. In this respect, AIDS impacts both ends of the age spectrum, both the very young and the elderly. All of these familial impacts have been felt by humans worldwide.

In relation, we have seen how the AIDS virus tears apart families and impacts all persons of the family. These impacts further compound from individual families, eventually reaching out and affecting entire populations. The mortality rates of AIDS affect areas obviously increase. As both young children and adults die from their AIDS induced illnesses.

Also, the average life expectancy of individuals drops drastically in these populations, due to the fact that AIDS transmission most often occurs in children and young adults. As stated by the article, *On the Socioeconomic Impact of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic*, " AIDS kills people mostly in the 15-49 year age group."

This age range of incurred infection leads to a drop in years of life as younger people die of the virus well before the normal projection of life expectancy. For example, " By 2005-2010, average life expectancy at birth in the 11 worst affected countries is projected to decrease to 44 years. instead of rising to 61 years as projected in the absence of the disease" (" On the Socioeconomic Impact of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic").

Lastly, due to the fact that AIDS affects persons in their reproductive years, a decrease in child bearing ensues, leading to population decline in afflicted nations around the world.

Over all the AIDS virus has caused a great deal of substantial and devastating impacts worldwide. Men, who act as the financial backbone of the families fall ill and can no longer provide for their families needs. The women often spend time caring for their ailing husbands rather than obtaining jobs for needed income.

The women and children can also unknowingly incur infection from the men of the family. Children and elders who are not affected find themselves without care givers and financial supporters. All of this adds up to leave nations around the world with increased mortality rates, lower life expectancy rates and fewer birthrates.

Also of importance to note are the economic impacts felt around the world as labor force declines the individuals affected can no longer work. Families as well as nations slide into poverty when they cannot produce the food or materials needed due to lack of human resources.