

Hiv aids and public health essay

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The class of diseases that poses the greatest risk to human health is communicable diseases. Communicable diseases are diseases, which can be passed on from one person to another. They pose the largest threat because naturally human beings are social animals. It is impossible for a human being to live alone in total isolation from other human beings. This increases the chances of communicable diseases passing on from one person to another until eventually everybody is infected. Communicable diseases can also be spread by an infected object or an infected animal thus increasing the chances of people being exposed to these diseases. Communicable diseases are mainly caused by germs, for example, bacteria, parasites, or viruses. Over the past fifty years, there has been a steady rise in the number of reported communicable diseases with the highest and most fatal being viral diseases. These diseases are deadly primarily because they are a hard nut to crack in terms of treatment and prognosis.

HIV and AIDS is perhaps the deadliest and most widespread communicable disease in recent history. This disease is caused by the aids virus. The initial period immediately after a person contracts HIV is known as acute HIV. In this stage, many people who are infected develop an illness that greatly resembles influenza. Within the first four weeks of infection, most people do not show any outstanding symptoms or any symptoms at all in most cases. Symptoms develop after an elongated period following infection and include throat inflammation, headache, fever, tender lymph nodes that are also large, a rash, and sores in areas of the genitals and the mouth. In certain instances, it is possible for the infected individual to develop opportunistic infections at this early stage. Other symptoms, which are very common in

instances of HIV infection, include diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting. The crisis arises because most of these symptoms are mainly of a non-specific nature. An infected person can visit a hospital with these symptoms and receive treatment for these symptoms without the slightest suspicion of HIV infection whatsoever.

HIV infection is primarily diagnosed by a HIV test. These tests are performed on a voluntary basis and are offered free of charge as part of the government initiative to curb further spread of the HIV pandemic. The HIV test is rather simple and involves placing of a drop or two of blood on an indicator, which then shows whether the blood has been infected by HIV. the test also shows cases of reinfection where the person has come in contact with the virus on multiple instances.

The disease is mainly spread through contact in terms of bodily fluids with an infected person or from an infected mother to her child during birth. The most widespread mode of transmission of the disease is unprotected sexual intercourse with an infected person. The main ways of preventing the spread of the disease is to avoid contact in terms of bodily fluids with an infected person. Protective measures during sexual intercourse like wearing a condom can also prevent infection.

Currently there is no known cure for HIV, and there is no effective vaccine for HIV. Treatment of the disease mainly involves high active antiretroviral therapy, which serves to slow down the progress and development of the disease. Other forms of treatment also include prevention of opportunistic infections and their treatment as soon as they occur in order to prevent further damage to the body.

Prognosis of the disease mainly involves cd4 count and the viral load. An infected person can survive for 9 to 11 years without treatment. After full development of the virus into AIDS, an infected person can only survive for 6 to 19 months without treatment. The HIV attacks the white blood cells, which are tasked with protecting the body from infections thus leaving the body susceptible to opportunistic infections.

References

Libman, H., & Makadon, H. J. (2003). HIV. Philadelphia: American College of Physicians.