

# Aids in the world



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AIDS is the fast becoming and the worst human disease disaster the world has ever seen. It is clear that in the next ten to fifteen years, AIDS will claim more lives than any other epidemic. As a matter of fact, every year and a half, it claims more human lives than the Holocaust. Nothing can be compared to the drag that AIDS has caused to human life.

There is just no human suffering and devastation as worst as it is. In the year 2002, there have already been 28 million recorded deaths due to AIDS and that is only the paltry beginning. The United Nations Security Council has labeled AIDS as a global security threat.

According to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, terrorism is not the most serious problem faced by the world today, but the AIDS epidemic. It is more than anything else destabilizing the entire planet (Hunter 2003).

### History of AIDS

The Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome or commonly known as AIDS was first observed in 1981. When it was first observed, it gained little attention as an infectious disease among experts. Accordingly, the first report was by Dr. Michael Gottlieb from the University of California Los Angeles. It was nothing from the AIDS that we know today. He described it as a rare form of pneumonia among homosexual men.

At the same time, there were also other reports referring to the same disease saying it was a rare kind of cancer (Conner et al 2007). Furthermore, the most mainstream case would be what happened in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention where they publish an article entitled “Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report”.

In this article, experts described the case reports of five young men at three different hospitals in Los Angeles. All five of them were sexually active and gay. Also, all five of them are suffering from a lung disease.

Furthermore, there were also case reports on 26 young homosexual men from New York and California that were diagnosed with Kaposi Sarcoma that was on the extreme level accompanied with skin and mucous membrane lesion.

It is observed that most of the victims were homosexual men so scientists asked what practices the homosexual community is engaged in that made them contract the disease. They postulate that a drug called amyl nitrate used by homosexuals to increase sexual pleasure may be the culprit.

There is also a theory that there are certain organisms in the homosexual body that caused the disease. By 1983, aside from the United States, there were already 16 countries that reported AIDS cases alongside more than 1000 Americans that were positively diagnosed (Weeks and Alcamo 2006).

This situation is often compared to that of the story of the six blind men and the elephants that is familiar to all of us as children. The elephant was the disease and the six blind men were the scientists and doctors that were grappling with its emergence.

They still do not have a clear idea what AIDS is, so they were treating the epidemic piecemeal. What physicians observed was that patient's immune system was literally suppressed but they do not have any idea it was the very cause of the disease. Before 1984, the situation worsened.

There were no clear definition for AIDS, no test available to affirm the diagnosis, and certainly no cure was in sight (Weeks and Alcamo 2006).

Despite the pessimisms among the people, researchers were beginning to unravel the mysteries of the disease that soon they call AIDS. The observed symptoms were then later on labeled as AIDS or Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome mainly because the symptoms were consistent with damage to the immune system among healthy people.

Furthermore, it was also learned that the disease was not congenital nor was it inherited but acquired from an infection of a virus. As of the present, the disease has become a prominent fixture in everyday language as its common name AIDS (Conner et al 2007).

Basic research on AIDS was primarily done in the United States by two of the leading governmental institutions: the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the National Institute of Health (NIH). There were also studies conducted in Western Europe by Pasteur Institute.

The Pasteur Institute was famous for their specialization in virology because it started out as center to combat rabies, the most horrible of all viral diseases. Prior to this, scientists in this institute has also done other viral discoveries such as that of Constantin Levadati who discovered the polio virus, Amedee Morrel who studied animal onco-viruses, and Felix d'Herelle who discovered bacteriophage.

They are part of the team who had will soon develop the field of molecular biology and soon understand the biological strategy of the AIDS virus (Grmek et al 1993).

The Pasteur virologists first encountered AIDS during a controversy about the Institute's production of hepatitis-B vaccine. The process required a massive amount of human plasma. In 1981, they purchased around 2, 500 liters of plasma from the United States blood banks.

A third of these were mixed to European plasma in order for them to prepare vaccine. When the product was tested to the chimpanzees, one of them developed hepatitis, and another died out of arbovirus infection (Grmek et al 1993).

In September 1982, Jacques Leibowitch, a physician working at the Raymond Poincare Hospital in Paris had been convinced that AIDS is caused by an exotic virus of African origin that affected T4-cells transmitted by blood.

The description of the virus was similar to that of HTLV retrovirus. He gave a seminar at Cochin hospital and informed the French task force about it. The French Task Force was pretty much convinced that the retrovirus might be the probable cause of AIDS. They were also -persuaded that it could be transmitted through blood (Grmek et al 1993).

Other scientists believe the agent came from a virus that causes African swine fever since the same virus can result to immune suppression of pigs. Others believed that it was cause by a slow virus, one that is multiplying at an extreme low rate that it only affects and manifests itself in the body after a few years.

Another group believes that the agent is a vital escapee from a genetic engineering laboratory. There was also speculation that says that it came from a failed biological war against Cuba (Grmek et al 1993).

In the United States, the group of Robert C. Gallo identified a virus in the blood of 48 patients with virus. They named the virus HTVL-III. They have published their works on theScience. In a few months that followed, there has already been a rivalry between the American and French experts each claiming that they were the first one who isolated the virus.

They contested that they should be one who'll receive international awards, research grants, and millions and billions of dollar patent rights. Until, they have settled after some time that the virus that they have been examining were of the same type. The United States for its part have a