

HIV AND AIDS IN SIERRA LEONE

HIV AND AIDS which means Human Immune Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome has been in existence for a long time now. It has been a great threat to not only human health but also to the world's population. Unlike Covid 19, it is not contagious but maintains a long-standing history of leading to death of both young and old in the human race since its existence.

HIV of course is caused by a virus and could be transmitted by various ways such as sexual intercourse, contact with infected blood as in blood transfusion or from mother to child during pregnancy, childbirth or breast-feeding. It is proven by medical science that it may take years before HIV weakens one's immune system to the point that they have AIDS. It is believed that scientifically there is no cure for HIV and AIDS but the progression of the disease could dramatically slow down by means of medications taken regularly.

People who are mostly prone to it are those who are promiscuous, of course commercial sex workers and their partners or customers are at high risk. People can also contact them through the means of used razor blades that have been infected which could be one of the reasons why advocacy on the end of female genital mutilation is still around. There are indications otherwise known as signs and symptoms

that prove that somebody is infected with HIV and AIDS. It is good to know that there are cells in the human body that help fight against germs and as the virus continues to multiply the immune cells will be destroyed. In the course of that the infected person may begin to develop mild infections or chronic signs and symptoms such as : fever, fatigue, swollen lymph nodes, weight loss, oral yeast infection (thrush), diarrhoea, shingles (herpes zoster) pneumonia etc.

Primarily, it starts sometimes with some people as a flu-like illness within two to four weeks after the virus enters the body. This illness, which is known to be primary (acute) HIV infection, may last for a few weeks. It is mostly the case that these symptoms could be hardly noticed because they could be so mild.

However, at this stage the amount of virus in one's bloodstream (viral load) could be quite high which as a result helps the infection to spread more easily during primary infection than the next stage.

According to scientific research, it is believed that there is tendency/ possibility for someone infected with HIV not to develop AIDS based on the fact that such person regularly takes anti-viral treatments. If HIV is not treated it turns to AIDS within eight (8) to ten(10) weeks.

With all these stated, there are ways by which people could be prevented from infection and not possibly from HIV infection. Protection from it's infection is possible. These are ways of preventing the spread of HIV.

The use of treatment as prevention. This means taking medications exactly as prescribed and getting regular check-ups. The use of unused or new condom during sex can help protect someone from getting infected with it. Infected pregnant women should regularly be treated so as to cut their baby's risk. Informing one's partner of their HIV positive status could help protect them as well by encouraging them to get tested.

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