KLP TASK 2: Community Outbreak

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AIDS is a disease that is caused by the virus known as HIV that stands for human immunodeficiency virus infection. Initially, a person that acquires AIDS, shows no visible symptoms and only experiences influenza-like illness. However, after the progression of infection, a person is at an increased risk of getting many common diseases because the virus directly damages the immune system (Konotey-Ahulu, 1989).

Specifically talking about the USA, AIDS found its way in the early 1960s although it was first identified when doctors discovered clusters of Kaposi’s sarcoma and pneumocystis pneumonia in gay men who were from LA and NY (Rosenberg, 1989). According to the statistics over 1.2 million people are currently living with an HIV infection. However, most concerning part is that more than 15% of people are still unaware that they have AIDS. Mostly, gay men, African Americans are more prone to this disease. In 2015 the AIDS outbreak occurred in the state of the US known as Indiana. The main reason for the spread of the diseases was due to the injection of a newly developed drug called Opana. Although it was recommended to use the drug in the form of pills it was injected intravenously. Due to lesser cases in the community, there were no specific methods to deal with any outbreak. This was a major reason that helped in the spread of a disease. After the outbreak due to government interventions, many programs such as safe needle programs were organized that provide awareness among people to prevent the diseases. Also, many health care centers were build that provide health care facilities to the people who were infected. Another approach that the government took was to put restrictions on the travel to contain the diseases in the specific area (Reif & Gong, 2014).

Similarly, in the UK many people were affected by AIDS. In the UK also most of the gay or bisexual people, Black people and other immigrants such as Latinos were highly infected by the diseases. The major outbreak that the country experienced was in 1980. During this time people were not aware of the disease and they labeled it as a “gay plague”. At this time most of the people that were diagnosed with the disease were drug users. There was no effective treatment for the people that were diagnosed with AIDS due to which the number of deaths was largely increased. After some time due to several awareness programs, people were aware of the disease and more work was done on the prevention of diseases. However, even in 2015, almost more than 1 million people were reported to have AIDS and 13% were still unaware that they have AIDS. Recently, due to government interventions, the number of people infected by the diseases is reducing. Many HIV prevention programs are running in the UK and most of the hospitals have allocated special units responsible for taking care of the people diagnosed with AIDS (Sinka & Morgan, 2003).

**Epidemiology of HIV/AIDS and risk factors**

AIDS is a very common disease and it is known globally. According to the statistics it is estimated that more than 36 million people were infected by HIV in 2017. However, many cases are still not reported also many people are not diagnosed with the diseases due to lack of health services accessibilities.  Although, according to the statistics most of the black Africans, Hispanics and Latinos were reported to have this disease. Also, many bisexual people are reported to have this disease (Adler, 2001). There are several modes of transmission of HIV/AIDS. They are listed below:

**Drug injection:**

Direct needle sharing is one of the most common ways due to which people can get infected with HIV. Even penetrating the contaminated needle in the skin is enough to transmit the diseases. Most of the drug addicts are vulnerable to get infected with HIV as they are involved in direct needle sharing. Mostly, cocaine and heroin users are above in the list of people getting infected with HIV (Lurie & Drucker, 1997). However, a health care facility is the main place where people are at a higher risk of getting infected. Many hospitals use sterilize syringes and then destroy the syringe after use however in many countries where the health care facilities are not up to date health care staff use the same syringe on a number of people. Although, most of the workers wash syringes yet the blood residue is more than enough to infect the person (Connors, 1992). As most of the people are unaware and remain undiagnosed with AIDS this direct needle sharing practice can be a potential threat to all the people that have used the same injection. Also, many hospitals have not developed a system for blood transfusion due to which many people that require urgent blood transfusion can be infected by HIV.

**Sexual transmission:**

This is the primary mode of transmission of HIV among people. Although the risk of getting infected by HIV after single exposure is typically low yet this factor cannot be neglected. Previously, it was considered that AIDS is a disease that occurs due to the intercourse between men however regardless of the sexual orientation of the person receptive anal intercourse is considered more dangerous and one of the reason of people getting infected (Schmiege & Bryan, 2016). Typically, females are at higher risks of getting infected by HIV (Adeboye & James, 2016).

**Perinatal transmission:**

Newborns and infants are at higher risks of getting infected by AIDS if their mother or father are injection drug users. Even if the mother is not a drug user but her partner is then still a child is vulnerable to get infected with AIDS. Also, an infected mother can transmit HIV during breastfeeding as well (Prendergast & Van de Perre, 2019).

In Virginia, there are more than 21,500 people currently living with HIV. Due to which it is very important that people have awareness regarding the disease so that they can prevent themselves from getting the disease. When the AIDS epidemic was on the rise my state was also influenced by the issue. In the past, there were no separate units in the hospitals that would treat patients even there was no proper way to diagnose AIDS. People used to think that this disease only occurs in the gay community due to which people were more violent towards them. Also, during outbreak schools and offices were closed as people thought that AIDS could spread through air and food, etc. but when people came to know about the real causes they were more afraid to get the treatment from the hospitals that involved syringes. However, due to government interventions and many health care organizations are working to organize awareness programs that can help people getting information regarding this disease. The topic AIDS was also included in the curriculum of students so that they can have an idea about the disease (Swati & Sushma, 2015). Specialized care units were developed to treat people having AIDS.

After the modes of transmission of the diseases were known my state has certain laws related to HIV/AIDS. According to the law, the engagement of people having AIDS in any sexual activity is considered illegal and is punishable by up to five years in jail and fine of $2500. Also, the selling and buying of blood or organ of a person infected by AIDS are considered as class 6 felony. Additionally, all the hospitals must report the case of the person having HIV and during outbreaks, it is legal to isolate the infected people to protect the community.

 To prevent an outbreak of the disease healthcare institutions of my state have developed certain educational programs to teach people about the disease such as “assess patient’s health literacy in which the knowledge of the patient is assessed regarding the disease also people are advised to go for regular screening so that any disease can be diagnosed at early stage. Also in my community, many seminars are conducted on the community level in which the whole community participates. These seminars spread information about several diseases as well the prevention techniques that can help people prevent the disease.

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