Health and Medicine

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AIDS is a disease that is caused by a virus called HIV. Initially, after coming in contact with the virus an individual does not show visible symptoms of the disease. However, after some time the infection start to progress in the body of an infected person, he or she is at an increased risk of getting many common diseases. This is because the disease directly damages the immune system. There are multiple ways by which an individual can get infected by HIV yet the most common are, drug injection, sexual transmission, and prenatal transmission.

  Specifically, discussing the US, according to the statistics, more than 36 million people were infected by HIV in 2017. Furthermore, more than 1.2 million are currently living with AIDS and the most concerning part is that more than 16% of people are still unaware that they have AIDS (Reif & Whetten, 2006). In our society, there is a stigma associated with AIDS and the people suffering from this deadly disease are discriminated against and bullied. While discussion about the Deep South states and the recent cases of AIDS, the author Andrew in his research paper highlighted that in the years 2008 to 2016, Deep South had the highest rates of people diagnosed with AIDS than any region with the US. Especially, Mississippi, and South Carolina, the states have a history of slavery with an agrarian economy based on plantation. It is noted that most of the population in these states is black and therefore African-Americans have to bear the burden of more than 44% HIV/AIDS cases. Moreover, in Deep South according to the statistics, more than 70% of the reported AIDS cases are of African-Americans (Reif & Whetten, 2006).

In the video, “HIV in the Deep South: The Stigma”, it was highlighted that even today AIDS is associated with gay men (*HIV in the Deep South*, n.d.-b). In the video, the narrator explained that people are ashamed of embracing and revealing their sexuality because of the stereotypical thinking of our society. Similarly, gay people who have AIDS are subjected to discrimination and in most cases are abandoned by the families. Although, the government of the US has transitioned in to the new era, where there is less discrimination against black people and people belonging from LGBTQ community yet, there still exists segregation between black and white people especially in Deep South States which is the reason of hurdles that the government face while restructuring the healthcare system.

 In another video “HIV in the Deep South: The Big Problem”, the narrator focused on the social exclusion framework to determine the potential causes of AIDS and its association with gender equalities. (*HIV in the Deep South*, n.d.-a). According to the narrator, relative perspective constitutes socioeconomic, political and cultural dimensions. These four dimensions make a hierarchy of social stratification. Once an individual is diagnosed with AIDS, due to the stigma associated with the diseases, he or she will be excluded from all the necessities of like job and social support. Social exclusion leads to lower self-esteem that can worsen the symptoms.

In another video, “In US, Poverty Weighs on Women’s Risk of HIV/AIDS”, the narrator highlighted that the main cause of HIV in the Deep South States is the increase in the prevalence of multiple STDs (*In US, poverty weighs on women’s risk of HIV/AIDS*, n.d.). However, poverty and poor access to health are the major factors that contribute to the disproportionate rates of HIV in the Deep South. Several studies have discussed that the HIV epidemic is concentrated in low-income communities, especially where black people are disproportionately represented. Individuals living in poverty do not have access to healthcare facilities and preventive services due to which AIDS is spreading among the population living in Deep South. The high levels of poverty also limit the ability of the state to allocate and distribute resources among individuals to provide adequate AIDS prevention and treatment facilities.

**References**

*HIV in the Deep South: The Big Problem*. (n.d.-a). Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iNJdqRK24Gc

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Reif, S., Geonnotti, K. L., & Whetten, K. (2006). HIV infection and AIDS in the Deep South. *American journal of public health*, *96*(6), 970-973.