
Facts over Fiction: HIV as a Social Implication in the Modern-day

When the social status nor the circumstances are no longer coherent, a global pandemic ascends as people continue to scramble off in ignorance. The Human Immunodeficiency Virus or infamously known as “HIV” is a major social implication that everyone must aware of. As noted by the World Health Organization (2017), HIV is a virus known to corrupt the cells of the immune system—deteriorating and impairing their respective functions. As a result of handicaps, HIV may evolve forth into its advance stage, AIDs, which is more noxious and incurable. Nevertheless, statistics by the Global Health Observatory (2017) states that about 70 million people are infected with HIV, 35 million have perished while 36.5 are currently fighting the said virus. Needless to say, that HIV is a rising medical issue, some people who’ve ought to combat HIV are still present in the contemporary. With persistence and positivity, these people do not only deal with the said ailment but also with the people who constantly criticized and degraded their beings. The aforementioned people are simply the society putting on its facade. In 35% of countries (including the Philippines), 50% of the people are described to have a discriminatory attitude amongst people with HIV. Regardless of having HIV, discrimination and bigotry are two factors that hinder growth and acceptance in society. Without being said, HIV continues to be an urgent issue given the pandemic nature and the baseless claims held by society.

According to Nall (2018), cases of HIV are first found in a country named Congo were hunters that kill chimpanzees for a living accidentally have contact with the animal's blood. By 1968 few cases of AIDS are found in the Midwest by transferring HIV through sexual intercourse. The year 1980 is the vast spread of AIDS all over the United States of America. Through its vast spread and a scandalous way of transferring from one person to another. HIV has been one serious implication in society. According to Cloete, et al. (2010), HIV - positive patients tend to have fears of being rejected and discriminated not by gender but by their health status. AIDS-related stigma includes being called a 'whore' or a person who sleeps around a lot. For some patients that are members of the LGBTQ+, they've been told that AIDS is a 'black' and a 'gay' disease. The said stereotyping boils down to the argument of discrimination and bigotry amongst people diagnosed with HIV. HIV stigma and discrimination affect the emotional well-being and mental health of people living with HIV. People living with HIV often manifest the stigma they experience and begin to develop a negative self-image. According to Sidibe (2017), Internalized stigma or self-stigma happens when a person takes in the negative ideas and stereotypes about people living with HIV and start to apply them to themselves. HIV internalized stigma can lead to feelings of shame, fear of disclosure, isolation, and hopelessness. These feelings can keep people from getting tested and treated for HIV. There are ways on how a complex issue as HIV stigma can be addressed. Some small things will make a big difference. According to CDC (2019), The words we use matter. When talking about HIV, certain words and languages may have a negative meaning for people at high risk for HIV or those who have HIV. We can be part of the movement to stop HIV stigma by being intentional and thoughtful when choosing words and to use supportive rather than stigmatizing the language when talking about HIV. Talking openly about HIV can help normalize the issue. It also provides opportunities to correct misconceptions and help others to learn more about HIV. According to Stang, A.L. et al (2013), HIV stigma is continuous in a fear of HIV. The lack of information and awareness combined with outdated beliefs lead people to fear to get HIV. Many people think of HIV as a

disease that only certain groups get and the most common group is the LGBTQ +, which leads to negative value judgments about people who are living with HIV. According to Wei Chong PH., et al (2016) Social stigma and discrimination, based on an individual's behavioral characteristics or identity, and HIV-positive status, are major barriers to accessing HIV prevention and services, including HIV testing and counseling, among men who have sex with men worldwide. As a result, MSM (men who have sex with men) do not reveal their same-sex behavior to others including health care workers. They also do not access HIV prevention services in fear that their sexual identity would be exposed or they would encounter discrimination from health care workers.

Famous figures like the famous singing legend from Queen—Freddie Mercury, has uplifted and motivated people who have HIV. HIV, often depicted as life-long sickness, does not ridicule a person's essence and humanity. Thus, programs and motivational talks are manifested to voice out awareness with regards to the said communicable disease. As stated by Meiers (2012) , topics such as HIV/AIDS must empower people into changing their mindsets, lengthening their patience and fostering empathy towards people to voice out their fears and confusion. By shedding light upon people who have HIV, the shame and humiliation that they are withholding are terminated and thus, are used as transformed into fuel to spread well. In doing so, Serophobia—the fear of people with HIV/AIDS—is invalidated for the real fear is what society has to utter. “Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that” said Martin Luther King, Jr., which serves as a reminder to not foster hate but rather to extend love to the sick and deprived.

In conclusion, education is the key that unlocks all doors that conceals ignorance. The implementation of school-based sex education is still taken into proper deliberation for it may spark into irksome ideas. HIV is a major social implication that is frankly present in contemporary. Although the said disease is incurable, preventive measures and proper knowledge may prevent from acquiring it. As recently recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2019), the only way to impart information and awareness about HIV is to get tested yourself. Disclosing a person's HIV status may pave off better treatment to prevent getting into worse scenarios. Hence, the proper knowledge can outweigh ignorance so that acceptance may overcome hatred.