

2018

Democratic Republic of the Congo: HIV/AIDS

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Tworek, John. "Democratic Republic of the Congo: HIV/AIDS" (2018). *Global Public Health*.
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Name: Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Location: The DRC is located in central Africa. It borders South Sudan and Central African Republic to the north, Uganda to the east, Zambia to the south, and the Atlantic to the west.



<https://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/africa/cd.htm>

Population: The most recent population census shows a total of 82,804,924 people living in the DRC. The most prominent ethnic groups include Mongo, Luba, Kongo, and Mangbetu-Azande (making up almost 45% of the population). The major religion is Roman Catholic, with smaller minorities in Protestant, Kimbanguist, and Islam (DR Congo country profile).

Political Structure: The country has a semi-presidential republic form of government. This is a system in which a president exists alongside a prime minister and a cabinet, with the last two responsible for the legislature of the state (DR Congo country profile).

Major Challenges: Some major issues that the DRC faces come from a civil war (1997-2003) and ongoing conflict in the east between ethnic groups. The major reason why health care is struggling is because of the country's infrastructure. With a lack of infrastructure, it is difficult to provide resources for people in need (Democratic Republic of the Congo).

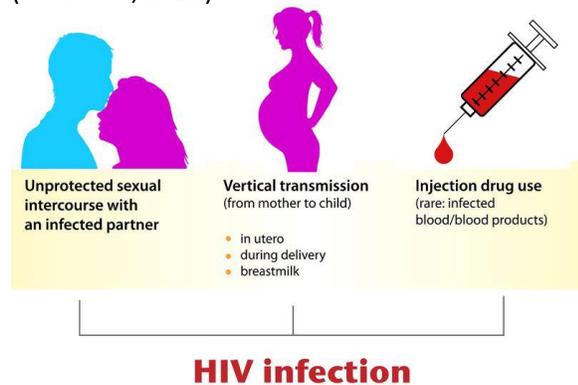
Health Problem Description:

Approximately 0.8% of the country is currently living with HIV/AIDS. If the percentage goes above 5%, the country will consider it a national crisis. One problem with why people are contracting HIV is because of the low rates of disclosure. The total number of estimated cases is 122,268, and deaths, 19,000 as of 2015 (Global HIV & Tuberculosis).

Information: Acquired Immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) is a serious life-threatening disease, caused by human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). HIV can destroy the T cells of the human immune system and destroy enough that the immune system can no longer fight off infections and diseases. As of now, it is an incurable disease. The most common way HIV is acquired is by members of the gay community, pregnant mothers who have been pre-diagnosed, drug abusers, and sex workers (Li, Teng, & Miao, 2017).

Epidemiology: Adults between the ages of 15-49 are the most at risk population. About 30% of the current population that is infected with AIDS is in that group. The most common treatment for people with AIDS is antiretroviral therapy (ART). Approximately 42% of people infected receive some form of treatment. The largest and least preventable population is mother-to-child transmission. About 70% of pregnant women who are HIV positive receive ART (UNAIDS). Some of the major risk factors for HIV include the educational system because of a civil war that lasted from 1997-2003 over

5.2 million children did not receive any form of education. Since, the number of children enrolled in primary schools rising from 5.5 million in 2002 to 13.5 million in 2014 (Schouten, 2013).



<http://martyre1987.blogspot.com/2015/12/ways-of-transmission-of-aids.html>

Identification: This disease is difficult to identify unless HIV has already changed to AIDS. The only way one can be identified with the disease is if they are tested specifically for it.

That is why it is critical for people to understand, and be educated that it is important to get tested on a regular basis. One way that it is used to identify populations that are impacted by the disease is to determine how much of the population uses safe sex, what part of the population is involved in same sex relationships, or what part of the population has less access to education? (Parker et al., 2017).

Suggestions: Personally, I believe that the best way to prevent HIV/AIDS is education. This an easy answer to say, but there are deeper roots to the problem. One way that education can be improved is by updating and building new infrastructure. With new infrastructure, there can be easier access to a larger amount of people because more buildings will be built across the nation. Also, I believe that the government needs to acknowledge that this in an issue and that education needs to be a priority for the country.

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