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Guinea-Bissau: HIV/AIDS

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GUINEA-BISSAU



MATT MACARTHUR

HIV/AIDS

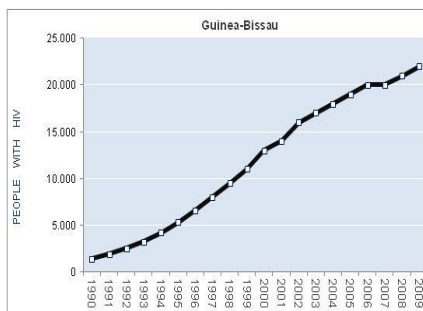
In Guinea-Bissau

Currently the biggest health problem in Guinea-Bissau is the prevalence of HIV/AIDS. HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. HIV attacks the immune system, specifically T cells whose main function is to fight off infections. If left untreated, HIV can destroy so many T cells that you cannot fight off infection. After T cell counts have

dropped below a certain number, a person is said to have AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). HIV is transmitted by contact with blood or bodily fluids from a person that has HIV. This most commonly occurs by having unprotected sex. However, it is very common in Guinea-Bissau for HIV to be transmitted from mother to child during pregnancy or birth. Guinea-Bissau has the 17th highest population living with

HIV/AIDS in the world at 3.69%. There are approximately 36,000 people living with AIDS (CIA, 2017). Men and women are at about equal risk for AIDS. It has been found that there are higher rates of HIV in urban areas compared to rural areas (Piedade, 2010). Also, people at

ages 15-24 are said to be at highest risk. There are many risk factors that increase a person's chance of contracting



<http://www.lifemanagementonline.com/health-info/statistics/hiv-aids-life-expectancy-guinea-bissau.php>

HIV and unfortunately many people in Guinea-Bissau have multiple of those risk factors. Research has shown that people who have had tuberculosis are at significant risk of contracting HIV. Other risk factors include multiple sexual partners, illiteracy, and scarce access to medical supply. Research has linked multiple sex partners to resulting in a sharp increase for HIV/AIDS risk (Gianlleli, 2010).

GENERAL INFORMATION

LOCATION: GUINEA-BISSAU IS A COUNTRY LOCATED IN CENTRAL AFRICA. IT IS SITUATED ON THE ATLANTIC COAST.

POPULATION: GUINEA-BISSAU HAS A POPULATION 1,844,000. THE BREAK DOWN OF ETHNIC GROUPS IS AS FOLLOWED: FULANI (28.5%), BALANTA (22.5%), MANDINGA (14.7%), PAPEL (9.1%) AND MANJACO (8.3%) (WHO, 2017). THE MAIN RELIGIONS ARE MUSLIM (45.1%), CHRISTIANITY (22.1%) AND ANIMIST (22.1%) (CIA, 2017).

POLITICAL STRUCTURE: GUINEA-BISSAU IS A SEMI-PRESIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT. IT HAS THREE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT: EXECUTIVE, LEGISLATIVE AND JUDICIAL. THE HEAD OF GOVERNMENT IS THE PRIME MINISTER, SOARES SAMBÚ AND THE HEAD OF STATE IS THE PRESIDENT JOSÉ MÁRIO VAZ.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CONFLICTS: GUINEA-BISSAU HAS BEEN PLAGUED WITH INTERNAL CONFLICTS. IN THE PAST 16 YEARS THERE HAS BEEN TWO COUPS, A CIVIL WAR, AN ATTEMPTED COUP, AND A PRESIDENTIAL ASSASSINATION BY THE MILITARY (COUNTRY REPORTS, N.D.). INTERNAL DISAGREEMENTS HAVE RESULTED IN VERY LITTLE PROGRESS BEING MADE TOWARDS IMPROVING THE COUNTRY. RECENTLY GUINEA-BISSAU HAS BECOME A DRUG TRAFFICKING HAVEN DUE TO ITS LAX LAWS AND LOCATION. THE FERTILITY RATE IS 4.7% CHILDREN PER WOMAN COMPARED TO 2.5% WORLDWIDE.

PERSONAL SUGGESTION

Due to governmental instability and lack of money, the most effective suggestions would exclude money. Guinea-Bissau has a very high fertility rate so it is important to inform its citizens on HIV/AIDS. This could be done by hosting clinics that educate people on how HIV/AIDS is transmitted and how to prevent the spread of it. A suggestion that requires only a little money would be recommending HIV/AIDS testing for citizens that are sexually active and/or expecting to be pregnant. This suggestion would make people aware of their disease status in hopes of preventing the spread of this infection. It also helps in determining if the mother has HIV/AIDS before pregnancy, which would reduce the mother to child transmission rates. While it is possible to help the spread of this infection with little money, more money and supplies are needed in order to treat individuals that already have the disease.

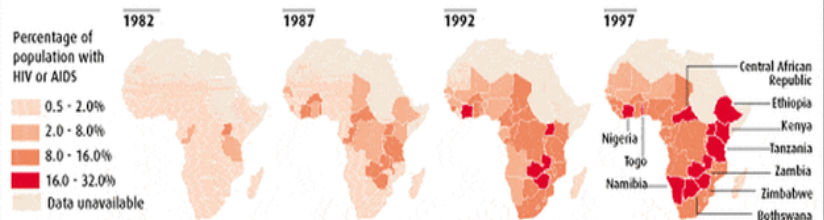
IDENTIFICATION AND INTERVENTION

Within two to four weeks after a person is first infected with AIDS, it is very common to have flu-like symptoms. After a while a stage called the clinical latency stage is formed, in which a person may not experience any symptoms while the virus is reproducing at low rates. A blood test will be done to determine if a person is affected with HIV; however it can take up to six months for the virus to show up on such test. HIV/AIDS can cause a variety of opportunistic infections due to low white blood cell count. Without treatment, it is very possible that whoever is infected with HIV/AIDS will die. It is likely that there are many cases of HIV/AIDS that have not been identified due to the scarcity of medical supplies. Guinea-Bissau is the 17th poorest country in the world. This lack of money makes it difficult to treat HIV/AIDS. The government has been very unstable for much of Guinea-Bissau's history. This unstable government has provided very little in terms of resources and money toward fighting this disease. Due to this governmental instability and lack of supplies, very little intervention has been attempted. There is currently no cure for HIV/AIDS; however, there are some treatments available that slow down the progression of the disease. These treatments such as antiretroviral therapy are expensive which limits the treatment methods available in Guinea-Bissau.

BY THE NUMBERS

HIV in sub-Saharan Africa

Since 1982, the spread of AIDS-causing human immunodeficiency virus had grown dramatically in sub-Saharan Africa.



SOURCE: Report on the Global HIV/AIDS epidemic UNAIDS/World Health Organization

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