

AIDS

From West to East ?

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THE human scientific technology is still fighting for the treatment of cancerous diseases whereas another havoc has cautioned the world against its rising and spreading risk. The disease is known as AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). AIDS is more dangerous than any other disease because it is highly infectious and fatal.

Immune deficiency diseases are conditions where the defence mechanisms of the body are impaired, leading to repeated microbial infections of varying severity. These diseases may be classified as primary or secondary. Primary immuno deficiencies result from abnormalities in the development of the immune mechanisms. Secondary immuno deficiencies are consequences of disease, drugs, nutritional inadequacies and other processes that interfere with the proper functioning of the mature immune system.

Mode of Infection

The World Health Organisation has urged developed and developing countries to share information on AIDS. A.W.H.O. release says that the AIDS virus is spread from person to person in three ways.

1. Through sexual contact with an infected person, direct contact (inoculation).
2. With infected blood or blood products or through secretions.
3. From infected mother to child before, during or shortly after birth.

Evidence

Dr. Kohn Scale said the virus could have been released in Central Africa, where the epidemic certainly began and a few cases have also been diagnosed in the Soviet Union. He also admitted that he had only circumstantial evidence to back the belief that the AIDS virus H.T.L.V. III had been engineered by adding an extra gene to one that is known as visna virus.

Havoc in U.S.A.

AIDS in U.S.A. is known as a killer disease and 55% of those who contracted it died of it. So much so that it is being spread rapidly. Despite stringent U.S. Laws and professional and School education it is continued to spread fast. Until recently it was thought to result mainly from male homosexuality. However, the studies have shown females as carriers.

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While U.S. agencies began a massive campaign to immunise the child in the world against fatal diseases, there was a new health threat of alarming proportions, particularly in U.S.A. and in Africa. The disease had been on the increase. Now the publicity also began to spread knowledge and also hysteria underlined in 1985 by the death of film star Rock Hudson after it had been known for some months he was a sufferer.

Though I had theoretical knowledge of this disease, I was shocked to know a number of patients practically. I visited three states of U.S.A. and everywhere I found such cases. I was told by a Director of Nursing of a private hospital that they were expecting 13 million people of such cases in near future. Now the readers can well imagine the sensational wave of AIDS.

I was very crazy to see such kind of patients but knowing the alarming threat of infection of such a dreadful disease I did not dare. I know a number of Indian friends, settled in U.S.A. used to refuse to attend such patients. If at all anyone agreed to take care of AIDS patients they took strict precautionary measures.

Research

The Australian Government has allocated \$ 1.5 million for research on AIDS during 1986. The research programme will cover the scientific, medical and social aspects of the disease.

A news from Boston gives the information that antibodies to the AIDS virus have been discovered in the saliva of AIDS victims, and this may explain why the disease is not transmitted through kissing and other contact with saliva.

The H.T.L.V. III test should be introduced in India to know whether any donor was ever exposed to the AIDS virus. The country must take safeguards at its blood banks.

Possibilities in India

Dr. J.K. Maniar, President, Indian Association for the Study of S.T.D, said the country does not stand the risk of acquiring the disease for at least a decade. He also emphasised that the samples of blood should be collected from the "risk group" and not in a random way. The "risk groups" in the case of AIDS were mainly homosexuals who indulged in indiscriminate sex like the members of the "gay clubs" in the West. He also said the sexual behaviour

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Your Hands : Lethal or Life Saving ?

MANUEL JAMES

KILLING of any kind cannot be justified. That is against human law. But killing is justified, when it is done to save the life of another human being. Nowadays mercy killing or Euthanasia is approved or justified in the medical world. When it is certain that one cannot be cured by medicine or medical treatment in order to save him from pain we kill him we cannot justify this action. We do not know whether new medicine will be invented or not. There are instances where people get relief from their illness, even without medical aid. In these circumstances how can we justify Euthanasia.

Criminal Abortion was prohibited in India. Recently government have given permission for abortion. Foreseeing the vast growth in population, government have legalised abortion. But is abortion a remedy for population? In European countries the termination of pregnancy for reasons of danger to mental or physical health of mother or child or family is approved. Even though it is an act of mercy I criticise it because when we become ill the medical and Nursing fields only try to cure it. Rather going to kill all of a sudden.

There are many means to control birth. Birth control can be justified. In birth control we do not kill a human life, the chances for pregnancy is avoided by this. But whereas a life is formed it is against medical culture to kill the life. As long as we cannot give life, we are not empowered to destroy a life. The child in pregnancy is helpless. It can not resist, even it cannot cry, killing a helpless child is more cruel than killing a matured man.

Nursing is meant to save the life. They are saviours than destroyers. Our profession saves life and does not destroy life.

As you know every Nursing action is based on broad principles. Man is an organism, life is same for both mature and immature. The foetus has certain needs to fulfil. So the parents and health personnel are responsible to fulfil the needs of foetus. Instead of considering him as a human being, killing him, is it justifiable?

Going on second principle man is a unique being. So he has certain rights. In Indian constitution there is an antagonistic feature. In one page of constitution, every Indian has the right to live anywhere in India. On another page abortion is permitted. Former law interfered with the abortion. If we are not allowing a baby to live comfortably even in the womb, which is the safest place of nature to grow or to develop, is it justifiable?

If we are doing abortion as a remedy for birth control it replaces nature's control over population which is the safest one.

It is illegal or wrong to ignore the application of these principles in the nursing care as and when required.

Instead of assuring the health, if we administer lethal medicine to the foetus, is it justifiable? One important aspect of abortion is it is not only harmful to child but to mother also.

We can say Nursing is a profession in which we save, and give care, untill and unless we can be able to stop this practice from nursing and medical field. You think whether your hands are lethal or Life saving. If found lethal ask yourself, am I to continue, if it is "No". Be alert and strike against this and assure a safety environment for "helpless and sick".

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in India normally did not permit the spread of AIDS, "as we do not indulge in indiscriminate homosexuality as the westerners". Because of their conservative value system and single partner sex life, Indians are normally saved from such diseases. But there is a great danger of the spread in view of the increase in the volume of tourism to this country. The intravenous drug addiction which is another possible factor for getting infected by AIDS is also not common in India.

In the recent past a person had been admitted in a hospital in Kerala with suspected AIDS. According to the report, the 23-year old patient was discharged from a Gulf hospital after his blood examination showed the presence of antibodies to the

H.T.L.V. III virus. He was kept under observation with strict instruction to nurses to keep him in isolation and avoid physical contact with him. However, he has been declared to be free of AIDS. In our neighbour country, Pakistan, a similar case has been traced and confirmed even by the local doctors.

Conclusion

There is still no treatment or sure cure of AIDS victims. Despite stringent U.S. laws and professional and school education it continued to spread fast. Though nothing can be said about future yet precautionary measures must be kept in mind to avoid an untoward incidence in India also.