

HIV / AIDS – Informing and Dispelling the Misconceptions

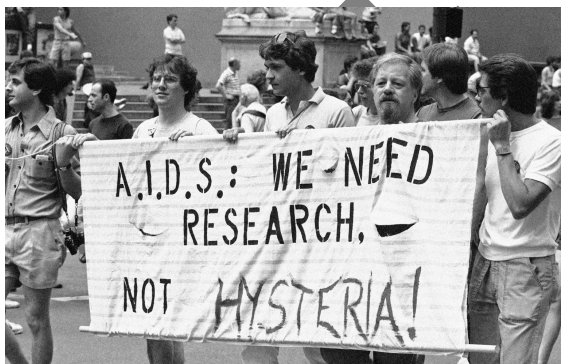
Mr. Edmund White, a highly acclaimed novelist, was already famous as a writer back in the 80's. As his reputation increased, his bold announcement that he was a gay man who tested positive for **Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)** only intensified it. He had HIV, which is a virus that eventually causes the body to lose its immunity or ability to fight off foreign substances like bacteria and viruses. As the virus spreads, the infected person becomes severely immune deficient in the late stages and HIV turns into **Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)** (What Is HIV/AIDS, 2015). However, many people feel that HIV and AIDS are separate illnesses when in reality AIDS is simply a more severe version of HIV.



Edmund White - Photo by David Shankbone

It all started for Mr. White in 1981, when he first heard from Dr. Alvin Friedman-Kien, a virologist from NYU, describing a series of strange illness that had been plaguing the gay community. Commonly seen were young men coming down with rare cancers such as Kaposi's sarcoma, or pneumocystis pneumonia-an infection of the lung. It was strange that all of a sudden, many unrelated illnesses were occurring at such a high frequency in one demographic. What is common between these patients is that their immune systems had all been suppressed (weakened). On September 24th, 1982, the term Acquired Immune deficiency Syndromes (AIDS) was used by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the first time, describing these set of observed conditions (A Timeline of HIV/AIDS, n.d.).

Hysteria began among the public as the fear of HIV/AIDS spread, because there was little understanding of what it was, how it was transmitted, or how (or if) it could be cured. For Mr. White, having HIV in the 80's meant having a death sentence that was not only drawn out but also stigmatized. However,



recognizing a lack of a support system or voice for people with AIDS, Mr. White made his status public in spite of the social consequences. "Mothers didn't want me picking up their babies. People didn't want to kiss you on the cheek...It was very isolating and demeaning", Mr. White recalled in an interview with CNN (Landau, 2011). But over the years with more understanding of the illness, things began to change for the better.

Present day understanding

Scientists worked at a speedy pace. In April 1984, the National Cancer institute found the cause of AIDS, the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).

What exactly is a virus? To put simply, a virus is a non-living, microscopic infectious substance that causes illness in living things. It doesn't look dangerous: a protein coat called the **capsid** surrounds strands of genetic material such as RNA and various proteins. However, you should not discount the potency of our little friend. Virus infects cells by injecting their genetic information into its target cell.

Reading Sample



This page has been removed

With Purchase



Google Access

Thank you for your purchase. Clicking the link button below will automatically create a copy of your resource inside your Google Drive. You'll find the file inside the 'Shared with me' section on the left side of your Drive.

Important: Before you click, make sure you're signed in to the Google account you'd like the resources placed into. If the resources are added to the wrong account, simply sign out and then into the correct one and repeat the process.

[Click here to place a copy directly into your Google Drive Account](#)





AIDS is diagnosed to HIV-infected individuals when their CD4+ T-cell count falls below 200 cells/cubic millimeter (mm^3) of blood, or when opportunistic infections occur (The Evidence That HIV Causes AIDS, 2010).

Transmission and precautions

HIV is transmitted through certain body fluids, such as blood, semen, rectal fluids, vaginal fluids, and breast milk. When infected fluid comes into contact with the mucus membrane or open wound of a healthy individual, HIV can be transmitted. Much to people's misconception, HIV is not transmitted through physical touching, tears, or saliva. Hugging, sharing glasses or kissing an individual who has HIV will not spread the virus. It is also rare to catch HIV through a blood transfusion as most blood clinics in North America carefully test and regulate their blood supply (Ratini, 2016).



Some precautions you can take to avoid transmitting HIV include avoiding contact with body fluids, being careful to dispose of sharps such as needles safely, and to use condoms when sexually active.

Treatment

Reading Sample



This section has been removed

With Purchase



Reading Comprehension Questions

1. How does HIV/AIDS affect people?
2. Describe
3. Describe
4. What is
5. True/False: HIV can be transmitted through tears and saliva. If false, provide the true answer of how HIV can be transmitted.
6. Why
7. What makes HIV the perfect killer?

Extension Questions:

8. Research the life of Earvin “Magic” Johnson. How is his life similar to Edmund White? When did he first contract the virus and how has his life changed as a result? Was HIV a “death sentence” for him?
9. Create an
10. How far has science come? Has anyone ever been cured of HIV?

TIME SAMPLE

Reading Comprehension Questions (answer key)

Reading Sample



This section has been removed

With Purchase



Google Access

Thank you for your purchase. Clicking the link button below will automatically create a copy of your resource inside your Google Drive. You'll find the file inside the 'Shared with me' section on the left side of your Drive.

Important: Before you click, make sure you're signed in to the Google account you'd like the resources placed into. If the resources are added to the wrong account, simply sign out and then into the correct one and repeat the process.

[Click here to place a copy directly into your Google Drive Account](#)





References

1. A Timeline of HIV/AIDS. (n.d.). Retrieved May 15, 2016, from <https://www.aids.gov/hiv-aids-basics/hiv-aids-101/aids-timeline/>
2. HIV Lifecycle. (2016, April 20). Retrieved May 15, 2016, from <https://www.aids.gov/hiv-aids-basics/just-diagnosed-with-hiv-aids/hiv-in-your-body/hiv-lifecycle/>
3. Landau, E. (2011). HIV in the '80s: 'People didn't want to kiss you on the cheek' Retrieved May 15, 2016, from <http://www.cnn.com/2011/HEALTH/05/25/edmund.white.hiv.aids/>
4. Ratini, M. (2016, April 26). What It's Like to Live With HIV/AIDS: Myths and Facts in Pictures. Retrieved May 15, 2016, from <http://www.webmd.com/hiv-aids/staying-healthy-10/slideshow-hiv-myths-facts>
5. The Evidence That HIV Causes AIDS. (2010, January 14). Retrieved May 15, 2016, from <http://www.niaid.nih.gov/topics/hivaids/understanding/howhivcausesaids/pages/hivcausesaids.aspx>
6. The Global HIV/AIDS Epidemic. (2015, November 25). Retrieved May 15, 2016, from <https://www.aids.gov/hiv-aids-basics/hiv-aids-101/global-statistics/index.html>
7. What Is HIV/AIDS? (2015, December 31). Retrieved May 15, 2016, from <https://www.aids.gov/hiv-aids-basics/hiv-aids-101/what-is-hiv-aids/index.html>