

AIDS

AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is one of the most deadly diseases affecting mankind today – deadlier than even cancer for so far it has remained completely incurable. There is still no vaccination or effective treatment for Aids. Aids is a multi system disease because the symptoms are similar to the symptoms of various other illnesses. Aids virus can be in the body for 10 years or more without being identified. In cases like this, the disease will be identified only later in life.

At the beginning it was thought that the Aids virus can be transmitted only through homosexual intercourse and blood transfusions. But, according to the speech made by the WHO representative at the Medical Research Institute recently it could also spread through bisexual intercourse. Now, it is commonly accepted that there are three ways of transmitting the HIV (Human immuno deficiency virus) to the people.

- * Through unprotected sexual intercourse with an infected partner.
- * Through blood transmission from infected people.
- * From an infected mother to her child during pregnancy or after birth.

Sexual transmission of HIV can occur from man to woman, from woman to man and from man to man. Blood transmission infections can occur through infected blood and blood products or by the use of unsterilised needles or other skin piercing instruments. The sexual transmission of HIV could be prevented by using condoms properly. On the other hand HIV is not transmitted through

ordinary social contacts – working together, sitting side by side, shaking hands, kissing on the cheek, hugging, touching, coughing or sneezing, by sharing dishes, plates, glasses or cups, by food or drink, by water or by any toilets.

The global distribution pattern of Aids is shown below. (according to

Year	S. L.	
	Citizens	Foreigners
1986	-	1
1987	2	2
1988	3	2
1989	11	-
1990	5	2
Total	<u>21</u>	<u>7</u>



"Safer sex" has become the focus for AIDS education campaigns throughout the world.

the statistics given by Dr. Jayakuru at the Seminar held by The Health Education Bureau (H. E. B.).

Cumulative Total of Aids Cases reported to WHO as at 31.10.90

Country	Cases
Africa (52)	75,642
America (44)	180,663
Asia (24)	790
Europe (29)	39,526
Oceania (8)	2,293

(No. of countries reporting one or more cases of Aids is 157). The infective rate of Aids is 1: 400 for the whole world. The highest rate reported from Africa is about 5: 100,000. As far as Sri Lanka is concerned 28 Aids cases have been found during the period from 1986 to 1990. The following table gives the annual breakdown:-

There are also 500 - 600 HIV infectious people in Sri Lanka. Many of these are identified as prostitutes and

those who have gone abroad for various kind of activities.

The World Aids day focusses the attention mainly on the impact of Aids on women. It is estimated that more than 3 million women in the world are already infected with HIV. According to current WHO estimates 500,000 people will fall victim to Aids during 1990 - 1991 of which 200,000 will be women. By the end of 1992 there is supposed to be over 600,000 women suffering from Aids. This is doubly dangerous because of the role women play in child bearing and rearing.

People with Aids and HIV or those thought to be at the risk of infection are mostly subjected to discrimination violence and other violations of their human rights. The protection the rights of these affected individuals is an urgent task today. The aim of The World Aids Day is to highlight the plight of these people. **K. G.**