AIDS Denialism
Erika Jenel Delos Santos, Roy Llana & Jocelyn Tan

INTRODUCTION:
Culture and beliefs play an eminent role in understanding certain aspects of health. When it comes to the topic of AIDS, many don’t agree that HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is a direct cause of the syndrome. Because people fail to see the connection between the two, they remain uneducated and are ignorant to the issues that may arise if they are infected. The majority of those infected happen to be women, which is particularly dangerous in the case of pregnancy. Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest percentage of infected people in society. A popular theory of transmitting this disease is through homosexual sexual activity. This theory is proved correct through a study done in 2007, where they discovered that 61 percent of people who are affected receive the virus through male to male contacts. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

AIDS DENIAL:
To clarify AIDS denialism, can be defined as groups, individuals, cultures and society who believe that AIDS is not the leading cause of HIV or the death cases subsequent to the association to the disease. AIDS denialism became more widely known thanks to Peter Duesberg and his hypothesis. His hypothesis stated that there is a direct correlation between AIDS and drug use. It also became widely known because of Christine Maggiore, whose daughter died because of AIDS-related pneumonia. Maggiore created an organization to assist HIV-positive mothers from taking drugs that could help lessen the risks of passing it onto their children. (LA Times) As stated, roughly 36.1 million adults and children currently live with an HIV infection worldwide. (Essex, Mboup, Kanki, Marlink, and Tlou 217-218, 251). This infection has its cons such as: negative impact on population growth, life expectancy, and infant mortality rates in regions. Researchers have found that ex-president Thabo Mbeki believed that South Africans were not dying of AIDS-related disease (McNeil 353-370). This ignited chaos for others because they did not know what to believe due to lack of resources such as clinics. In today’s American society, many are knowledgeable about the disease thanks to people who advertise HIV/AIDS testing and provide education that clarifies sexual intercourse. Although many Americans have died from this disease, there are drug treatments and prevention tips such as the use of condoms, having intercourse or engaging in sexual activities with one partner, and practicing abstinence. Practicing safe habits is encouraged because it prevented. However, there are different circumstances around the world. Clearly, in less developed countries, there are not as many available sources to show the residents what is occurring and the consequences of being unsafe with sexual intercourse.

ANALYSIS:
Education and health facilities are just a few reasons as to why certain people do not consider AIDS as the leading cause of HIV or death. Those who are in denial of AIDS have not been properly informed about the disease, which explains why they choose to believe that HIV is a direct cause of AIDS. Because they are uneducated, they seem ignorant and are at greater risk for actually getting the disease. The reason why AIDS denialism is considered unethical is due to the fact that transfiguring this virus is more likely. By not believing that they are correlated, people risk not taking proper precautions for prevention. However, Americans cannot use being oblivious to the risks of AIDS denial because aspects such as prevention methods are constantly discussed and promoted in society. Commercial for condoms, birth control and getting tested are frequently shown. People should recognize that this is an actual disease in the country and see that makers of these commercials want to endorse health. The infected population in America clearly affects the advancement of treatments and overall awareness. Though sub-Saharan African residents are not exposed to the same things, particularly education, because they have been influenced in the past. The ex-president, Thabo Mbeki, persuaded the inhabitant that HIV does not lead to AIDS, which explains their ignorance concerning the virus. By this excessive influence from the leader of a country, it is expected that the citizens of South Africa believe the same thing. Because they are unaware of the true effects of HIV, it is constantly being spread. This is dangerous for those who have multiple sexual partners, because prevention is not promoted. Lack of promotion means that they clearly do not know about the negative aspects of not being safe.

WORKS CITED:


Fig. 2. Number of infected women on the rise