

# Campus & City

## The Deadly Disease

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Guest Writer

AIDS (Acquired - not inherited -- Immune Deficiency -- a breakdown of the body's defense system, producing susceptibility to certain diseases -- Syndrome - a spectrum of disorders and symptoms) has become a "hot" topic between sexually active couples nowadays because it's "lethal." Yes, once a person has this deadly disease, it's with Him/her until death. In layman terms, it's a disease that can damage the brain and break down the body's ability to fight off infection or illness. It also allows other infections, such as pneumonia, cancer, and/or other illnesses, to enter the body. These diseases are able to kill the person after invasion.

This disease is a breakdown of the body's defense system. The virus which causes AIDS is "human-immuno-deficiency virus" (HIV) and contains a spectrum of conditions. HIV is a retrovirus that must live and reproduce inside human cells.

There are numerous early symptoms which are similar to the common flu: persistent enlargement of lymph nodes, excessive tiredness for no apparent reason, a fever, chills or night sweats, persistent diarrhea, and/or a sore throat that won't go away. If one has one or any combination of these symptoms, and if they last for two weeks or longer, this indicates a need to seek professional medical care.

Although the symptoms are common to the flu, one should know that AIDS is not passed by casual contact in schools, at parties, nor in the workplace. One won't catch the disease

by associating (such as hugging or shaking hands) or by being around someone who is infected with the virus. There's no evidence of an insect bite, such as a tick bite or mosquito bite, spreading the lethal disease. Plus, AIDS is not transmitted from a toilet seat.

The explanation of who's at the most risk lies in social and economic factors: intravenous drug use, urban poverty, and limited access to health care are prime factors, especially among people of the inner city. A majority of the women and infants in the U.S. infected with the disease are those in racial minorities.

People who have the infection need the same type of support and friendship that they always had, and more. AIDS doesn't have a "set" course of progression, so every case is different. The care of the infected patient will vary accordingly for each illness. Friends can help matters by continuing to talk to the patient, doing things together, and sharing experiences.

The number of women who catch HIV and later develop AIDS is increasing. Women and men contract the disease in the same manner -- having unsafe sex or by sharing needles when shooting up drugs. Women should avoid pregnancy if they have concerns about AIDS, because they can pass the HIV virus to the fetus, maybe through her breast milk.

Although there's no way to test for AIDS, there is a test to detect the presence of the HIV virus which leads to AIDS. It is a brief test, consisting of a blood test

in which the health worker just pricks your finger for a sample of blood. Then there is a wait of about a week for the results. The community health center even offers professional counseling, if you have a positive result, and they give out condoms, free of charge, to anyone. One should definitely consider having the test, if he or she has a concern or has been involved in "risky" behavior -- *early detection is vital!*

A person can't tell if he or she has the virus, so he or she can spread it further unconsciously.



As you can see we are really laid-back....

The detection of the virus may have both negative social and psychological consequences, such as depression, loss of one's job, and being a social outcast, along with others. So, if one tests positive, he or she should seek professional help immediately such as that provided by the county health department. To help minimize the risk of everyone

knowing, anonymous tests are given -- you are identified by a number assigned to you by the never donate blood if he or she suspects the presence of the HIV virus.

People who don't use drugs, and have a mutually faithful, single-partner relationship are the group most protected from HIV and AIDS. One has a higher risk of acquiring AIDS if he or she has various sexual partners. The only protection, though it isn't 100% effective, is the use of condoms.

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enthusiastic and full of new ideas," said Lisa Gaw, an admissions counselor since June 1990. She noted other changes including an application form that has been revised and shortened to make it less intimidating, so that more students will sit down and fill it out. Counselors have traveled more including private visits and high school visits. The alumni have also joined in the effort by making phone calls and helping with our area receptions.

The specific roles of leader and follower would be obsolete, as David Southwood-Smith, an admission counselor with more than a year's experience, explains: "Yes, it's definitely a group effort. Of course, Joe accomplished a lot, but by the time he was let go morale was very low. Dean Benson changed all that

around. There is still friction but when you have competitive, idealistic people working together there are going to be conflicts. Friction is good though - it brings out the best in people in our office. Each one of us can more than pull our weight and we are a much more experienced group than the year before."

Dean Benson said, "It is easy and rotten to blame one's predecessor." He explained, "Joe Rigell did some good things, but I was not overly impressed." Benson said that the actual foundation for improvement was laid by Peggy Crawford, director before Joe Rigell and that Joe just learned from her. The "up-tempo atmosphere" and the "tightening-up" of the office, plays a big role in the success of the Admission Office. "Our staff is doing a superb job," Benson said.

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There are 2.5 to 6 million people in the U.S. who are or will be mentally retarded in their life-time, and there are approximately 176,000 in North Carolina. "This society (ours) has a very biased view of intelligence. This (CT) helps develop creative growth, which helps mental growth, because they occur simultaneously," Jan explains. W.C.C. is a way station to the community help ing the residents to adapt to society.

There will be a show on the work done by the residents of Western Carolina Center beginning April 2nd at 7 PM and is to continue on through the month. The exhibit will be open to anyone who are interested.