

Lecture 3: HIV/AIDS & Children

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**HIV and AIDS by numbers (2015 Estimates)**

- Number of people living with HIV – 1,500,000 [1,300,000 – 1,800,000]
- Adults aged 15 to 49 prevalence rate - 5.9% [4.9% - 7.0%]
- Adults aged 15 and over living with HIV – 1,400,000 [1,200,000 – 1,700,000]
- Women aged 15 and over living with HIV – 830,000 [700,000 – 970,000]
- **Children aged 0 to 14 living with HIV – 98,000 [81,000 – 120,000]**
- Deaths due to AIDS - 36 000 [26,000 – 47,000]
- **Orphans due to AIDS aged 0 to 17 – 660,000 [540,000 – 810,000]**

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**Who is a Vulnerable Child?**

- A child in this case refers to any child of age 0 – 18 years
- A **vulnerable child** is defined as being under the age of 18 years and currently at high risk of lacking adequate care and protection
- Accordingly, all **children** are **vulnerable** by nature compared to adults, but some are more critically **vulnerable** than others
- A child is at **risk of contracting HIV** if he/she is predisposed to conditions that expose him/her to the HIV virus
- Most vulnerable children are at risk of contracting HIV

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**Vulnerable/Children at Risk of Contracting HIV/AIDS**

- Unborn
- Orphaned
- Children at war stricken countries/war zones
- Children from poverty stricken families
- Children from broken families
- The homeless
- The Adolescence

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**Transmission of HIV/AIDS to Children**

- Mother-to-child transmission (current transmission rate at 15%:
  - At pregnancy (In utero transmission)
  - During the labour & birth (Intrapartum transmission)
  - From breastfeeding
- Children can be infected through sexual abuse or rape
- Injection of drugs
- Blood transfusion

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**Transmission of HIV/AIDS to Children**

- Testing for HIV is important to establish the status of a child, however, it is sophisticated and there are challenge that hinder the testing

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**Barrier/challenges to HIV testing for infants and children**

- They include;
  - Ignorance of the parents/care giver
  - Lack of access to health facilities
  - Lack of testing kits in the existing health facilities
  - Lack of qualified health personnel especially in rural areas
  - Ineffective transport and communication
  - Cultural/religious beliefs
  - Legal and structural barriers
  - Poverty levels
  - Fear of stigmatization and discrimination

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**Effects of HIV/AIDS on Children**

- Developmental milestone of the child
  - Affects cognitive development
  - Neurological problem
  - Learning difficulties
  - speech and language problems
- Academic progress- may lead to dropping from school
- Psychological effects
  - Depression
  - Stress
  - Stigma
  - Rejection at home and school
- Health of the child

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**Effects of HIV/AIDS on Children**

- Economic challenges leading to poverty
- Loss of care givers
- Infection with the HIV
- Death

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**Group Discussion**

QS: How should teachers support children infected or affected by HIV/AIDS?

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**Support For Children Living With HIV/AIDS**

- HIV disclosure
- Providing access to medical facilities
- Providing access to ART/ARVs and ensuring:
  - Adherence to ART
  - Making follow up
  - Change of drug incase of drug resistance
- Family support for children living with HIV e.g. social protection schemes, counseling
- Provision of education – right to education
- Psychological support through support groups
- Protecting children against stigmatization & discrimination

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