

HIV/AIDS BULLETIN

SPLA HIV/AIDS Bulletin

February 2007 Edition

Introduction

The purpose of this monthly bulletin is to provide the SPLA with basic HIV/AIDS facts, which serve as ammunition in the fight against HIV/AIDS. The facts will assist the SPLA to speak out openly about HIV/AIDS and promote care and support of the infected, affected and their families.

HIV/AIDS is a major concern for the SPLA and the nation of Southern Sudan as a whole. The SPLA has formed an HIV Secretariat as one of its directorates and will oversee the implementation of HIV/AIDS activities in the military.



Senior SPLA officials made a study tour to the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) in December 2006 to strengthen their understanding of military-based HIV/AIDS programs.

Definitions

HIV- Human Immunodeficiency Virus

AIDS-Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

AIDS results from the destruction of the body's defense system by the HIV virus. HIV destroys the white blood cells, which are the soldiers that fight infections in the human body. With the white blood cells (soldiers) destroyed by HIV, the body is vulnerable to all sorts of infections such as tuberculosis, pneumonia, skin diseases, etc.

Where in the Body Can HIV Be Found?

High levels of HIV are found in human body fluids like blood, semen and vaginal fluids. Low levels of HIV are found in breast milk and saliva.

HIV Can Be Transmitted Through:

- Sexual intercourse with an HIV infected person
- Blood transfusion with HIV infected blood products
- Use of unsterilized needles, syringes and other body piercing/cutting instruments
- An HIV infected pregnant woman to her unborn child or to her newborn child through breast milk during breast feeding.

You Cannot Get HIV Through:

- Casually touching an infected person
- Shaking hands with an infected person
- Sharing food with an infected person
- Sharing forks, cups, spoons and plates with an HIV infected person
- Sharing clean clothes/towels with an HIV infected person
- Insect bites like those from mosquitoes.

Behaviors that Expose People to HIV:

- Having unprotected (without a condom) sexual intercourse with a HIV infected person
- Having multiple sexual partners
- Using unsterilized needles and syringes
- Sharing cutting instruments such as circumcision and tattoo knives
- Accidental needle sticks or splashes of body fluid or blood into your eyes, mouth or open areas on your skin that might occur while caring for wounded comrades.

Who Is Most at Risk of HIV Infection?

Every sexually active person is at risk. The risk however, increases for people who have more sexual partners and who practice unprotected sex.

Why Are Soldiers at a Higher Risk for HIV Infection?

- The majority of soldiers do not fear death
- Soldiers may have multiple sexual partners due to their mobility and long periods spent away from their spouses
- Some soldiers may be prone to drunkenness and alcoholism, which can lead to poor judgment about sexual behavior.

How to Prevent HIV Infection Through Sex?

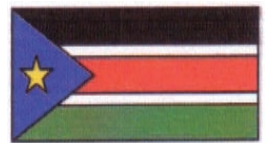
- A- Abstain from sex
- B- Be faithful to one HIV negative partner
- C- Use a condom every time you have sex

In the next issue of the HIV/AIDS bulletin:

Facts on HIV Counseling & Testing

The opening of the 1st SPLA Counseling and Testing Center at Mess 40 barracks in Juba

Collaboration with the SPLA Training and Research Directorate



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