**Public Health**

     Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) affects the immune system of humans by destroying the CD-4 cells. It progressively advances into Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS). HIV alters the body’s immune system thus making the body more vulnerable or prone to diseases and other associated infections. The virus attacks the all the body tissues.it is transmitted through body fluids like semen, bold, breast milk and virginal fluids of the infected people. Research indicates that the virus attacks the immune cells known as the CD-4 cells which are the subset of the T body cells. Being a viral disease, HIV/AIDS manifests with hotness of the body associated with a sore throat, chills, joint and muscle aches, lymphadenopathy, and a rash (Rebeiro et al., 2017). These are immediate symptoms. The advanced signs and symptoms that are related to the late stages include persistent diarrhea, general body weakness and exertion, wasting and thrush. Also, they present with chronic dry cough, fever and night sweats that are mostly associated with tuberculosis. HIV/AIDS has affected the health status of many individuals all over the world. However, the Black American in the Southern United States of America has been accounted for higher rates of HIV/AIDS in the USA. This is as a result of new statistics which have shown an increase in new diagnoses of individuals living with HIV together with those who have ever received an HIV/AIDS test as compared to other races across the US. There have been high death rates in the southern region which is more affected (Rebeiro et al., 2017). This paper shall provide a detailed discussion of HIV/AIDS among the African-Americans in the United States.

The Deep South region of the USA that is majorly composed of the African Americans and other minor races like the Hispanic has borne particularly high HIV/AIDS burden rates. These rates are significantly the driving rate of the HIV/AIDS pandemic across the United States. Recent studies indicated that the African American population account for about 44% of the HIV/AIDS diagnoses cases and they only represent approximately about 12% of the United States’ population. This has resulted in great impacts in the region as a result of illness and loss of lives because of the disease. The condition has further been worsened by lack of essential measures to prevent new infections and provide care for the affected population. Generally, the region has recorded the highest number of people diagnosed with the disease and at the same time, 80% of the states having the highest number of HIV cases are found in the region (Reif et al., 2014). Despite the region being the most affected, majority o the people are naïve about the occurrence of the disease when compared to other regions. Furthermore, the number of victims in the region receiving the essential medical care to manage the conditions is also very low. At the same time, measures taken to prevent further infections are effective. Therefore, the number of people perishing from the disease continues to be high as it is estimated to be three times higher compared to other regions. Over 45% of the deaths reported in the region have been attributed to HIV/AIDS. This calls for appropriate measures to be taken in order to address the epidemic for the sake of the citizens in the region and US in general (Reif et al., 2014).

Despite the region recording the highest number of HIV cases in the US, there are a lot of disparities in the population effect. Generally, the most affected population is found in the urban places. The urban and semi-urban areas in the southern region have the highest number of HIV cases diagnosed compared to urban areas in other regions with almost the same population and size. The high rate of HIV cases in urban areas of the southern region has caused difficulty in implementing strategies meant to address the epidemic. Apart from region disparities, the occurrence of HIV cases in the region varies according to race. Studies have shown that African Americans are the most affected as they contribute to over 55% of all the cases in the region. Furthermore, in all cases of black American men having HIV/AIDS in the USA over 60% are from the southern region. For black women, it is as high as 69% (Abara, Coleman, Fairchild, Gaddist, & White, 2015).

The HIV/AIDS epidemic in Southern America has been influenced by various factors which are either social or economical. Some of the common economic factors include income disparity and poverty. These factors are not only common for people living with HIV/AIDS but have generally affected the region making it poorest in the country. Poverty in the region has not only contributed to increase in HIV/AIDS in the region but also other health conditions such as diabetes, cancer, infant deaths and other impacts which have led high mortality rate. Poverty has also contributed to lack of access to health care services hence victims of HIV/AIDS cannot get appropriate treatment and care services. Hence, most of them succumb to the disease at early stages. Most of the southerners are also not subscribed to health insurance hence it becomes a challenge for them to cater for health care costs. Culture has also contributed to the increase in the adverse effects of the disease in the southern region (Rebeiro et al., 2017). Fear to get tested has led to lack of willingness for most people to get tested for the disease as most people are afraid to be seen publicly seeking testing services. This has also affected people who have been diagnosed with the disease as they are afraid of stigma associated with the disease. Hence, they do seek medical care and treatment to sustain them. This has also affected efforts to address the epidemic because it is a challenge to obtain essential information about the spread and infection of the disease which could be important in the prevention of the disease. The lagging behind of the south in the measures to address the spread and infection has also one of the factors which have contributed to an increase in the effects of HIV. Unlike other states which have embraced measures such as mechanisms to determine infections stages, these states have failed to do the same. Hence, it is difficult for the infected people in the region to take the appropriate measures to prevent infecting their partners and close relatives from being infected. States and local authorities in the region have also failed to put legislative measures to address the situation in the region. For instance, there is no mechanism to ensure that reports about new infections are obtained in order to facilitate preventions and allocate resources for measures to address the challenges (Reif et al., 2014).

There are various measures and approaches which can be taken to address HIV/AIDS pandemic in the Southern region. This could be achieved scientific methods and interventions aimed at assisting the general population. These should not only involve authorities and organizations in the region but also from all over the country. The state and local health departments should be provided with enough funding and other resources to aid programs aimed at reducing number of infections and managing conditions of those who are infected. These funds and resources should be directed to prevent strategies such as innovating simple HIV testing and making the services accessible. It should also aim at assisting those who have been affected to access early treatment and care. Furthermore, there is need to provide more education to the public as well as support in reducing chances of being affected (Reif et al., 2014). For instance, providing awareness about the disease, how it can be prevented and facilitating resources necessary for preventions such as HIV prevention people for people who are at high risk of being infected and use of condoms especially for those who have been infected. There is need for education to be provided especially among the youth because they are sexually active hence have higher chances of being infected by the disease. This could be achieved through education provided through institutions and public campaigns. Furthermore, condoms should be made readily accessible to them to assist in reducing new infection rates. Health services must also be made accessible to the region to facilitate treatment and care for people with HIV/AIDS as well as to implement measures aimed at reducing cases of infection in the region. Health centers must also be equipped with appropriate resources to facilitate services aimed at reducing effects of the disease in the region. The states should also play a role in addressing the issue of HIV/AIDS pandemic in the region through funding state health departments. The state departments should also be involved in linking people who have recently been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS to appropriate medical treatment and care. The residents of the region should also be involved in the measures to address the pandemic. For instance, they should be highly involved in mobilizing measures aimed at improving outcomes and reducing rates of transmission (Reif et al., 2014). This will facilitate early diagnosis of the disease and forging close relationship with medical providers within the society. Hence, there will be reduced number of people succumbing to death due to late diagnosis of the disease and lack of appropriate care. There is also need to work on the various disparities which have been evident on the cases of diabetes through various mechanisms such as providing medical insurance coverage to those who are vulnerable in the society. The various challenges hindering measures meant to address the pandemic in the region should also be identified and addressed to accordingly (Abara et al., 2015).

In conclusion, HIV/AIDS is a serious pandemic which has affected many people not only in America but also all over the world. The southern region of US is highly affected by the disease as thousands of people have succumbed while others are still suffering from the impacts of the disease. It is discouraging to note that the number of new infections is still high which means more lives being lost in future. Therefore, there is a need for the communities and authorities including states and local government to join hands in addressing this pandemic; otherwise more lives will be lost.

**References**

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