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By Doctor Tandavan

Our previous three articles on AIDS focused on the nature of HIV and its transmission. We now continue by explaining some basic ways to prevent getting AIDS and the urgent need to increase our awareness of this deadly dilemma.

It seems there is little that we can do to conquer the "plague of the century," but we must try. Our first line of defense is to be aware. We must arm ourselves with as much knowledge as we can. We can not blindly accept what the health and government agencies of any nation say about it, for they have a political and monetary interest which makes them prone to be less than truthful. We must realize that the blood supplies may all be contaminated in spite of testing programs -often short cuts are taken. So if one needs elective surgery, he should furnish his own blood for use during or after the surgery. Become politically active to assure that meaningful laws are passed to save the uninfected. The fear of losing one's job if found HIV+ should be eliminated, an alternative is needed. We must know that our dentist uses heat sterilization of his instruments. He, as well as the patient, should be protected by glasses or other shields. We must know that the endoscopes (instruments used to look within body cavities) are gas sterilized. At home, the usual home disinfectants are to be used judiciously. Although chlorine does kill HIV, one must be assured that proper procedures are taken in the care of swimming pools, for indeed these are reservoirs of human secretions.

There is no such thing as safe sex, except no sex. Those who propose that the use

of a condom makes sex safe are doing a very great disservice to our youth. Aids can be transmitted by kissing, possibly even by holding hands and other body contact, so even light petting is forbidden with anyone you do not absolutely know is free of the HIV. We should consider that anyone who is promiscuous is probably HIV+ and therefore a health hazard. Consider that all prostitutes are HIV+. The ancient Hindu practice of brahmachariya, chastity must be brought back as the rule again. I also believe that mandatory blood testing before marriage is essential.

The great fallacy of our youth is, "That cannot happen to me!" The truth is that it can happen to you- and to you and to you and to you. And it may well happen unless we are aware every moment of the day and night of the potential threat.

Condoms have 15-25% failure rate even as a preventative of pregnancy. Studies have shown that the HIV came through 33% of the condoms tested. The virus is much smaller than the natural holes in the latex condom. This was an experiment without any motion or pressure on the condom, which I conclude is useless-the failure rate is probably nearer to 75%.

Because of the political nature of AIDS, the money made by researchers and pharmaceutical houses and the great sums that insurance companies lose, all humanitarian aspects of the disease are forgotten. Government and news agencies fear creating a panic. Yet the possibility of killing the vast majority of people and the reduction of their finances to the poverty level are real.

The subject of AIDS is 99% political, 1% medical and 100% fatal. Be aware, and protect yourself.