



War Within

“It’s time to make the connection between debt relief and epidemic relief. If the international community relieves some of their external debt, these countries can reinvest the savings in poverty alleviation and AIDS prevention and care. If not, poverty will just continue to fan the flames of the epidemic”

– Peter Piot, Executive Director of UN AIDS

setting
the stage



Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome, or AIDS, is caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) that targets the body’s **immune cells**. The impaired immune cells are then unable to fight off other bacterial and viral infections that most of us deal with easily. So, for example, people with HIV are 800 times more likely than the general population to develop active **tuberculosis**.¹¹⁰

HIV/AIDS is not just a disease of sex workers and injection drug users, although unprotected sex with multiple partners and the use of dirty needles that carry the virus are high risk behaviours. HIV/AIDS affects both men and women, rich and poor; however, because “**poverty**, underdevelopment and **illiteracy** are among the principal contributing factors to the spread of HIV/AIDS”¹¹¹ rich and poor are infected at different rates. As with all sexually transmitted diseases, facts, myths and rumours all combine to set a deadly stage for infection.¹¹²

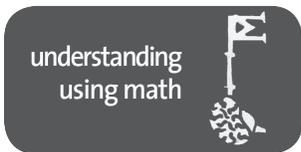
¹¹⁰ *State of the World Population 2003, Making 1 billion count: investing in adolescents’ health and rights* UNFPA 2003, p. 25.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 23.

¹¹² *Ibid*, pp 23-25.

In many places in the world, young women tend to have sexual relations with older men, who may already be infected. In societies where young women have very little power, their ability to negotiate the use of condoms is compromised. Even talking about sex is rare in many countries. And knowing about HIV/AIDS does not necessarily mean that people know about or will take preventative measures.

Because this **pandemic** is created by many social, biological, religious and economic factors it will take knowledgeable and skilled people to stem the disaster.



Why do you think that poverty, underdevelopment and illiteracy contribute so much to the spread of HIV/AIDS?

1. The following table demonstrates the relationship between the number of youth infected with HIV and time in seconds.¹¹³

Number of youth infected with HIV	20	30	35	50
Time in seconds	280	420	490	700

- What is the algebraic equation that describes the number of youth infected with HIV over time?
- Use your equation to calculate how many youth a day are infected with HIV.
- How many youth are infected each year with HIV? Relate that number to something that you are familiar with.

2. The following table demonstrates a pattern between per capita income and infection rate.¹¹⁴

Increase in per capita income	\$4,000	\$5,000	\$7,000	\$8,000
Decrease in infection rate	8%	10%	14%	16%

- What is the algebraic equation that describes the relationship between per capita income and infection rate?
- If a government could increase its per capita income by \$3,000, what would happen to the rate of infection in the country?
- Why do you think poverty is linked to infection rate?

¹¹³ *State of the World Population 2003, making 1 billion count: investing in adolescents' health and rights* UNFPA 2003, p. 23.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 23.

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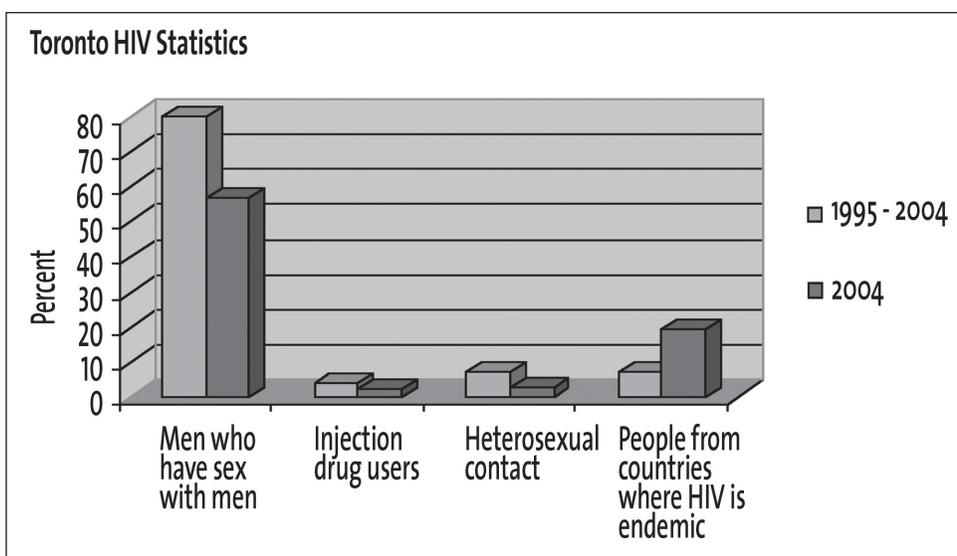
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3. Biologically speaking, women and men have different risks associated with unprotected sex, captured in the following table.¹¹⁵

Number of young men infected	8	11	23	25
Number of young women infected	24	33	69	75

- What is the ratio of infection rate for women compared to men?
 - Why do you think that this is so?
 - Does this mean that young men can be less careful about unprotected sex?
4. Look at the following graph about the modes of HIV infection and make two conclusions based on the data.¹¹⁶



5. Use the information in the following table¹¹⁷ to create a **spreadsheet** and a graph of your choice to demonstrate a comparison of your choice.

People Infected with HIV			
Region	Young Women (%)	Young Men (%)	Total
Sub-Saharan Africa	67	33	8,600,000
North Africa and the Middle East	41	59	160,000
East Asia and the Pacific	49	51	740,000
South Asia	62	38	1,100,000
Central Asia and Eastern Europe	35	65	430,000
Latin America and the Caribbean	31	69	560,000
Industrialized Countries	33	67	240,000
World	62	38	11,800,000

¹¹⁵ *State of the World Population 2003, Making 1 billion count: investing in adolescents' health and rights* UNFPA 2003, p. 23.

¹¹⁶ <http://www.actoronto.org/website/home.nsf/pages/hivaidstatsto>

¹¹⁷ *State of the World Population 2003, making 1 billion count: investing in adolescents' health and rights* UNFPA 2003, p. 23.

Food for thought...

In 2003, in the **developing world**, less than 5% of the people who needed anti-retroviral drugs to treat HIV had access to them.¹¹⁸

“I believe that this could very well be looked back on as the sin of our generation. I look at my parents and ask, where were they during the civil rights movement? I look at my grandparents and ask, what were they doing when the holocaust in Europe was occurring with regard to the Jews and why didn't they speak up? And when we think of our great, great, great grandparents, we think, how could they have sat by and allowed slavery to exist? And I believe that our children and their children, 40 or 50 years from now are going to ask me, what did you do while 40 million children became orphans in Africa”

– Rich Stearns, President of Word Vision, US



- Go to the website www.stopthinkbesafe.org and play *STD Invaders*.
- Invite a public health nurse or a person living with HIV/AIDS into your classroom to answer questions about sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS.
- The Stephen Lewis Foundation helps to support people living with HIV/AIDS. Their website is www.stephenlewisfoundation.org.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, p. 27.