

COLORS 67: HIV/AIDS

Just 25 years since its discovery, the HIV virus has managed to inhabit the bodies of 40.3 million people—the equivalent of Spain's entire population. Many people think that the global AIDS/HIV situation is under control because of the advance in medicines. Media attention has diminished, donations are turning elsewhere. Simply wearing the red-ribbon promotes awareness not prevention.

COLORS 67: AIDS re-focuses attention on the HIV virus 25 years on, with visual reportage and factual information. The effects that it has had on those who contracted it 25 years ago and those who got it at birth last year. The issue also gives a voice and face to many people who are doing their best to prevent the spread of the virus.

77 percent of all women with HIV live in sub-Saharan Africa. In Botswana, Cynthia Leshomo just won the title "Ms Botswana HIV Stigma Free 2005". In a country where 40 percent of the sexually active adult population is HIV positive, she is using her beauty queen status as a way of spreading the word on prevention and overcoming the stigmas attached to HIV-positive people.

Antiretroviral therapy has saved nearly two million years of life in the USA.

Sean Strub has had over US\$250,000 worth of prescription anti-retrovirals and other drugs pumped into his body since he discovered he was HIV-positive twenty years ago. Taking advantage of the impact of magazines, he founded one for HIV-positive people opening up the discussion in a glossy way.

By 2010, there will be an estimated 20-25 million people living with HIV in India alone. Loon Gangte, 40, from India used to be a heroin junkie and contracted the disease by sharing needles. He now lobbies multinationals, generic drug companies, the government and HIV-negative people to let them know that the virus cannot be forgotten and that everybody should have the right to medication.

Less than 20 percent of high-risk people in the world have access to basic prevention services. Unprotected sex, blood transfusions and sharing needles are just some of the ways the virus spreads. It doesn't discriminate by race, age, sex or class. It is no longer a matter of being aware of AIDS/HIV it is time to do something to stop it. Projections say that over 100 million people could be affected by 2070—the equivalent of the entire current populations of Madagascar, Venezuela, Algeria and Poland combined. So, speak up, donate condoms, clean needles, healthy blood and your voice and time. It is only going to get worse if we do not do something.

COLORS 67: On newsstands in April

*NOTE: In the time it took you to read this, at least 20 more people were infected with HIV.

For further information:

Elisabetta Prando
Tel. +39 0422 516201
prando@fabrica.it
www.colors magazine.com