ANTHROPOLOGY

AIDS

A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Patricia Whelehan

with contributions by Thomas Budd

The Anthropology of **AIDS**

A Global Perspective

Patricia Whelehan with contributions by Thomas Budd

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Abbreviations

ACTUP AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power ADA Americans with Disabilities Act ADAP AIDS drug assistance programs

AIDS Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

AMA American Medical Association

A/PI Asian/Pacific Islanders
ART Antiretroviral therapy(ies)

ARVs Antiretrovirals

ATS Alternative test site/anonymous test site

AZT076 Zidovudine 076

CALPEP California Prostitute/Prevention Education Program

CBOs Community-based organizations

CDC Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ELISA Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay

FBOs Faith-based organizations
FDA Food and Drug Administration
FDC Fixed Dosage Combination

FTMs/F2Ms Female to males (transsexuals/transgendereds)

GRID Gay-related immune deficiency

HAART Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy
HIV Human immunodeficiency virus

HIV- HIV negative HIV+ HIV positive

HTLV Human T-cell lymphotropic virus

IDU Injection drug use IDUs Injection drug users

KAB Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behavior model

KS Kaposi's sarcoma

LAV Lymphadenopathy-associated virus

MC Male circumcision

MHC Major histocompatibility complex

mRNA Messenger RNA

MSM Men who have sex with men

XIV

MSW Men who have sex with women

MTF Male to female (transmission of HIV)

MTFs/M2Fs Male to females (transsexuals/transgendereds)

MTCT Mother-to-child transmission

NIDA National Institute of Drug Abuse

NIH National Institutes of Health

NIMH National Institute of Mental Health

N/SEPs Needle/syringe exchange programs

NGOs Nongovernmental organizations

NGU Nongonococcal urethritis

OIs Opportunistic infections

P-A Penile-anal intercourse

PCP Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia

PEP Postexposure prophylaxis

PEPFAR President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

PhRMA Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America

PI Protease inhibitor

PLWH/As Persons living with HIV/AIDS

PNAP Partner Notification Assistance Program

P-V Penile-vaginal intercourse

RT Reverse transcriptase
SIV Simian immunodeficiency

SIV Simian immunodeficiency virus

STDs/STIs Sexually transmitted diseases/sexually transmitted

infections

TAC Treatment action campaign

TASO The AIDS Service Organization (Uganda)

TB Tuberculosis

TGs Transgendereds

TSs Transsexuals
TVs Transvestites

WHO World Health Organization

WSM Women who have sex with men

WSW Women who have sex with women

Preface and Acknowledgments

Since the recognition of HIV/AIDS more than twenty years ago, there have been volumes written on the topic. To date, however, there have been few textbooks written on the subject for liberal arts undergraduates. This book synthesizes data to present undergraduates with an overview of the epidemic from an anthropological perspective. This perspective integrates biocultural, gender, social, political, and economic factors in exploring HIV/AIDS epidemiologically, biomedically, and sexually, as well as how the epidemic impacts various groups and societies. This text can be supplemented with ethnographies, case studies, and edited sources about HIV/AIDS.

I would like to gratefully acknowledge institutions, groups, and individuals who made this book possible. First, I would like to thank SUNY–Potsdam, specifically the Anthropology Department, the dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, the provost, and the president for granting me a semester's sabbatical to write the first draft of this book. That time was invaluable. I also received a Research and Creative Endeavors grant from the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at SUNY–Potsdam to defray some of the costs of manuscript preparation. The University Press of Florida, specifically editor John Byram, offered me a contract for the book early in its development. Thank you for your confidence in this project and for your insightful comments on drafts of the first chapters.

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An Anthropological Perspective on HIV/AIDS

CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE

An overview of medical anthropology as a subfield of anthropology and its place within anthropology

A discussion of the anthropological concepts, methodologies, and theoretical orientations found in this book

An observation that an anthropological and medical anthropological perspective can help us to understand and address the worldwide AIDS epidemic

The HIV/AIDS Crisis

The bubonic plague (Black Death—Middle Ages (fourteenth century)

Smallpox—Late agrarian age (seventeenth century through the twentieth century)

Tuberculosis—Industrial Revolution (nineteenth century through the twenty-first century)

HIV/AIDS—Late twentieth and twenty-first centuries

These four diseases are some of the most virulent that humans have encountered. Before the virus's impact peaks, **HIV/AIDS** will take a greater toll on the human species proportionately and in absolute numbers than the bubonic plague, smallpox, and tuberculosis combined, according to the United Nations and the Office of the Surgeon General (www.aarg.org 2001; Madhok et al. 1994; Office of the Surgeon General 2001). Smallpox has been eradicated, and the bubonic plague still occurs sporadically. Tuberculosis (TB) continues to affect people in nonindustrialized societ-

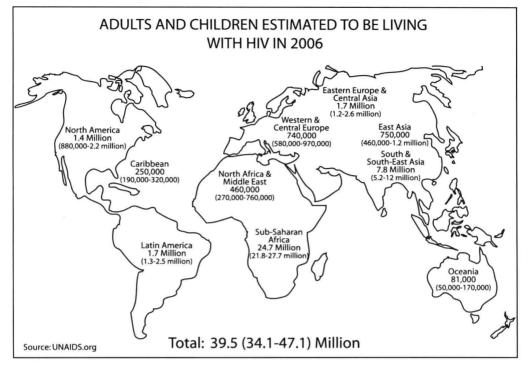


Figure 1.1. Adults and children estimated to be living with HIV in 2006, by region (Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, May 2008, hereafter UNAIDS, 2008).

ies and compounds the seriousness of HIV/AIDS where both are found. Figures 1.1 through 1.3 indicate the spread of HIV around the world as of 2006 and the projected occurrence of HIV in key areas of the world as of 2010.

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is the virus that causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). AIDS, the end result of having HIV, is a collection of diseases and compromised immune states that almost always results in death if left untreated. Worldwide, AIDS kills more than 50 percent of the people infected with HIV. Global estimates since the beginning of the **epidemic** state that between 33 million and 57 million people have either HIV or AIDS (Merson and Dayton 2002: 13; UNAIDS 2007). Every day, 16,000 new infections occur (Sarche 2003:D5). Currently, HIV/AIDS is most widespread in sub-Saharan Africa and India.

If people are not personally aware of someone who has HIV or AIDS, it is easy to believe that this disease is someone else's problem. However,

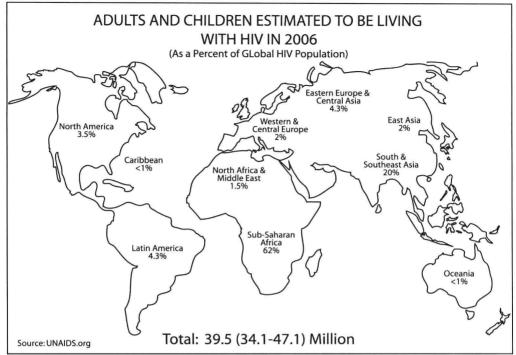


Figure 1.2. Adults and children estimated to be living with HIV in 2006, as a percentage of global HIV population (UNAIDS, 2008).

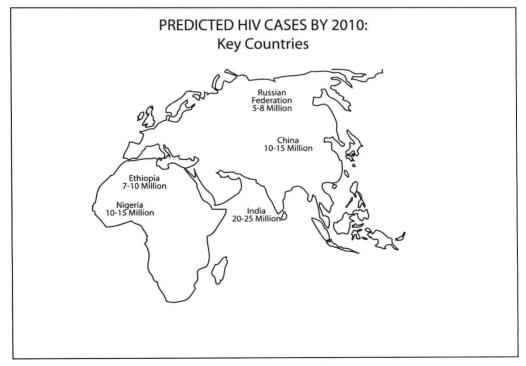


Figure 1.3. Predicted HIV cases by 2010: key countries (UNAIDS, 2008).

4

HIV/AIDS is a global concern. This disease affects the core of the societies where it is found, particularly in places such as sub-Saharan Africa and India, both of which have a large number of people infected as well as a significant percentage of these populations infected and affected by the disease (see chapter 2). The impact of the disease cuts across age, gender, sexual orientation and behavior, and sociocultural boundaries. It affects individuals and groups throughout the life cycle from conception through old age. The impact of HIV/AIDS crosses the sociopolitical, economic, religious and spiritual, and sexual domains of societies (Herdt et al. 1990). HIV/AIDS is an important topic of study because of how widespread and deadly it is, devastating societies and subcultures around the world. Given the global dispersal of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, it is a suitable topic for anthropologists to study. Anthropologists have specific skills that can help reduce infection, support HIV testing, and assist groups where AIDS occurs. These skills, discussed in this chapter, include in-depth knowledge of the values, beliefs, and symbols of a group as well as their behaviors; a relativistic perspective in which norms and practices are viewed within the context of the entire life of the group; and a comparative approach to data so that similarities and differences within and between groups can be assessed through time and space.

Anthropology, Medical Anthropology, and AIDS

This textbook addresses the HIV/AIDS epidemic from an anthropological perspective.

What is an anthropological perspective?

What is the relevance of anthropology and medical anthropology overall to the HIV/AIDS epidemic?

The answers to these questions form the core of this chapter.

Anthropology, the study of human behavior, formally began as a discipline in Europe and the United States in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Kottak 2000). In both Europe and the United States, the discipline was largely academic and theoretical. In Europe, anthropology focused on understanding the behavior of colonized peoples in Africa, India, Southeast Asia, Melanesia, and Micronesia, to more effectively use resources in those areas. In the United States, anthropology's focus was chronicling and recording the "disappearing" native groups in the Americas.